Civil Society and Conflict Transformation in Abkhazia, Israel-Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and Western Sahara

MICROCON Policy Working Paper 3

Nona Mikhelidze and Nicoletta Pirozzi

November 2008

MICRO CON
A MICRO LEVEL ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Correct citation: Mikhelidze, N. and Pirozzi, N. 2008. *Civil Society and Conflict Transformation in Abkhazia, Israel/Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and Western Sahara.* MICROCON Policy Working Paper 3, Brighton: MICROCON.

First published in 2008

Cover photo: A ‘peace pilgrimage’ in Jenin, West Bank in 2005 © David Lisbona, used under the following licence: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/

For further information, please contact:
MICROCON: A Micro Level Analysis of Violent Conflict, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE
Tel: +44 (0)1273 872891
Email: info@microconflict.eu
Web: www.microconflict.eu

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

MICRO CON

Civil Society and Conflict Transformation in Abkhazia, Israel/Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and Western Sahara

Nona Mikhelidze[1] and Nicoletta Pirozzi[2]

MICROCON Policy Working Paper 3

Abstract: The paper describes and analyses the role of civil society in five conflict cases – Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Western Sahara and Israel/ Palestine. It evaluates the relative effectiveness of civil society organisations (CSOs) and assesses the potential and limits of CSO involvement in conflicts. In particular it concentrates on civil society activities in the fields of peace training and education, including formal and non-formal education, as well as research and media work. The research also identifies the obstacles that local third sector is faced with, examining experiences and lessons learned. The study then presents critical assessments of local CSO contributions to conflict transformation and concludes with a set of suggestions for local and mid-level civil society actors involved in these five conflict cases and beyond. This paper is an overview study, to provide ideas and documentation to the more detailed empirical research carried out in the context of the MICROCON Work Package 'Conflict in the European Neighbourhood'.

Keywords: Civil society, European Union, European Neighbourhood, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Western Sahara, Israel/Palestine, violent conflict, conflict transformation

[1] Visiting Research Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Via Angelo Brunetti, 9 00186 Roma, Italy. Email: nonamikhelidze@yahoo.com
[2] Researcher in European Affairs, Istituto Affari Internazionali. Email: n.pirozzi@iai.it

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Both the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the EU are rife with unsettled conflicts. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of nationalist movements in the new independent states, several secessionist conflicts erupted. Violence, followed by population displacements and unsettled status questions characterize the conflicts in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. The peace processes in all three conflicts between the metropolitan states and the breakaway entities have been frozen by competing Western and Russian interests at top political and diplomatic levels. Turning south, the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara was divided in 1976 between Morocco and Mauritania. Mauritania later surrendered its claim in favour of Morocco, which annexed the entire territory and created mass displacement of Saharawi refugees, mostly to southern Algeria. The Polisario Front engaged in a guerrilla war against Morocco until the 1991 UN agreement to hold a referendum on the future of Western Sahara. To date, the referendum of the status of Western Sahara has not been held. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict instead, repeated attempts have been made to broker a two-state solution, which would entail the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The direct negotiating parties are the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), but there are various domestic and international actors involved and most notably members of the Quartet, including the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations.

Negotiations in all these conflict cases were/are predominantly conducted by top-level actors. To date they have failed to reach tangible results. In this context this paper seeks to analyse:

- How civil society organizations (CSOs), as mid and grassroots actors, impact upon conflict dynamics?
- How effective are CSOs in conflict resolution efforts?

To tackle these questions, this paper examines:

- What type of initiatives are undertaken by local CSOs in order to influence peace efforts?
- What is the interaction between CSOs with domestic governments and external donors?

- What methods and tasks are used and undertaken by CSOs?
- What is the potential and the limitations of CSOs in conflict resolution efforts?

These questions are addressed by combining a selective analysis of the documents and secondary literature on conflict resolution and transformation applied to the empirical cases of civil society engagement in Georgia/Abkhazia, Azerbaijan/Nagorno-Karabakh/Armenia, Moldova/Transnistria, Morocco/Western Sahara and Israel/Palestine. The aim of this study is thus to describe and analyse the role of civil society in these five conflicts; evaluate the relative effectiveness of these actors and assess the potential and limits in CSO involvement in conflicts. It also aims at identifying the obstacles that local civil society is faced with, examining experiences and lessons learned. This paper is an overview study, to provide ideas and documentation to the more detailed empirical research carried out in the context of the MICROCON Work Package, 'Conflict in the European Neighbourhood'.

This paper is divided into theoretical and empirical sections. The theoretical part starts with a definition of civil society actors. It provides an overview of the concept of civil society, its functions, objectives, and its understandings in different contexts. The paper then analyses the specific role of third sector engagement in ethnic conflict, exploring its potential, limitations and effectiveness. It does so by engaging with conflict and peace theories, including the concepts of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-settlement reconciliation, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The empirical part of the paper outlines general trends in civil society development in the metropolitan and secessionist states. It then provides an overview of CSOs by concentrating on the sub-sector of local NGOs. In particular it concentrates on civil society activities in the fields of peace training and education, including formal and non-formal education, as well as research and media work. The paper then presents critical assessments of local CSO contributions to conflict transformation and concludes with a set of suggestions for local and mid-level civil society actors involved in these five conflict cases and beyond.

2. Civil society in democracy and peace

Over the years, there has been a growing interest in the concept of civil society and its contribution to peace. There is no commonly agreed definition of what and who this sector actually includes however. According to the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society, civil society 'refers to the arena of uncoerced collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values… [It] commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power…'[3] According to other experts, civil society includes all forms of voluntary activities and participation in different sectors of public life. For others still, the role of civil society is to interact with the political sphere, influence it and increase its responsiveness. More specifically for the purpose of this paper, this sector operates through diverse civil society organizations (CSOs). CSOs can be defined as the 'wide area of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations,'[4] and which try to prevent the state dominating society.[5]

Most definitions of civil society and CSOs are tightly interconnected with the concept of democracy. According to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), civil society together with state and market is one of the three "spheres" that constitutes democratic societies.[6] Civil society does so by promoting democracy; seizing political initiatives and thus trying to enlarge the space for political participation.[7] In other words, civil society acts within the political space located between the state, political parties, and the economic and private spheres, that is a political space in which governance and development goals are contested. Civil society therefore interacts closely with the state,[8] even if independence from it is one of its main characteristics. Its crucial role is to influence the state and increase its effectiveness and responsiveness, but at the same time to limit itself to a "technical"

[3] See London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society.
[4] See Document of the World Bank, (2006), Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potentials, Limitation and critical Factors.
[5] See Gellner, E. (1995), The Importance of Being Modular, p. 32.
[6] See Rooy, A. Van (1998), Civil Society and the Aid Industry: The Politics and Promise, p. 19.
[7] See Hall, J. A. (1995), In Search of Civil Society, in J. A. Hall (ed.), Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison, Polity Press, p. 1.
[8] See Document of the World Bank, (2006).

watchdog role.[9] Kumar defines civil society as part and parcel of democratic pluralism.[10] Likewise Bryant argues that civil society is an arena which grants possibilities of concerted action and social self-organization.[11] It involves citizens acting collectively in the public sphere to express their interests and ideas, achieve mutual goals, advance demands on the state and hold state officials accountable.[12] Hence almost all agree that the main aim of civil society is to support democratic and pluralistic societies, create opportunities for public involvement and political participation and allow citizens to influence decision-making.

2. 2. Civil society in conflict and peace

2.2.1. Peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-settlement reconciliation

Beyond promoting democratic governance, civil society can also play a potentially important role in conflict resolution. Conflicts tend to arise over non-negotiable disputes over the satisfaction of fundamental basic needs. Therefore conflict resolution means going beyond negotiating interests in order to meet all sides' basic needs. Civil society actors can be instrumental in this respect. CSOs have access to the parties involved in conflict and the ability to bring parties to dialogue. They also induce local populations to get involved in long-term reconciliation efforts. By working directly with local populations on the ground, civil society is also able to assess the situation more effectively than top levels of governance or external actors.[13]

Civil society involvement in conflict and peace gained greater prominence since the Cold War, not least in view of the mushrooming of conflicts in this period.[14] Peace efforts may be divided according to the different stages of conflict, i.e., efforts and activities aimed at conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-settlement reconciliation. Conflict prevention activities include early warning efforts,

[9] See Dudouet, V. (2008), Civil society organisations in war-to-democracy transitions: From peace-building to peace-sustaining roles, pp. 3-4.
[10] See Kumar, K. (1993), Civil Society: an Inquire into the Usefulness of a Historical term, p. 375.
[11] See Bryant, Ch. GA, (1993), Social Self-Organisation, Civility and Sociology: a Comment on Kumar's Civil Society, p. 399.
[12] See Diamond, L. (1994), Rethinking Civil society: Toward Democratic Consolidation, p. 5.
[13] See Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N. (1998), Civil Wars, Civil Peace: An Introduction to Conflict Resolution, p. 70.
[14] See Paffenholz, T., Spurk, Ch. (2006), Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding, Social Development Papers, Conflict Preventions and Reconstruction, p. 16.

violence prevention and the establishment of peace zones.[15] Peacemaking efforts include all those activities conducted to induce a ceasefire agreement and a thereafter a peace settlement between conflict parties. Article 33 of the UN Charter outlines the modes of peaceful third party action in this process, including 'negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, [and] resort to regional agencies or arrangements'. In addition, Articles 41 and 42 allow for sanctions, blockades, and violent intervention to induce an end of violence between warring parties and an ensuing peace agreement between them.[16] Peacekeeping activities include all those third party activities aimed at preventing a re-eruption of violence and the implementation of negotiated agreements. These range from civilian and military missions, humanitarian assistance, the monitoring of ceasefire agreements, and assisting ex-combatants in implementing peace agreements.[17] Post settlement reconciliation is a long-term process, achieved by fostering coexistence, mutual respect[18] and mutual forgiveness.[19]

Peace efforts can be conducted also within several broader frameworks of action, reflecting different approaches to the promotion of peace: conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Conflict management approaches aim at the short-term management of armed conflict in ways that makes confrontation less damaging. Key actors in this phase are governments and multilateral organizations (mostly the UN), rather than civil society actors.[20] Conflict resolution instead aims at solving the causes of conflict and rebuilding relations between the parties not only at the top but also at mid- and grassroots levels of society. Mid-level civil society actors are particularly important in this respect to ensure influence is exerted on leaders.[21] The principal instrument in conflict resolution is negotiation between conflict parties, whose aim is that of framing their understanding of the conflict differently so as to view it as a common or shared problem to be resolved.[22] It is a process of communication in which the disputants aim to influence each other by "sending a

[15] See Maiese, M. (2003), Peacebuilding, Knowledge Base Essay.
[16] See United Nations, Charter of the United Nations: We the People of the United Nations... United for a Better World.
[17] See United Nations, Ibid.
[18] See Gutmann, A., Thomson, D. (2000), The Moral Foundations of Truth Commissions, pp. 22-24.
[19] See Shriver, D. W. (1995), An ethic for enmies: forgiveness in politics, pp. 329-31.
[20] See Deutsch, M. (1973), The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes.
[21] See Paffenholz, T. Spurk, Ch., (2006), p. 20.
[22] See Lewicki, R. J. Saunders, D. M., and Minton, J. W., (1999), Negotiation, p. 29-30.

message".[23] Fisher and Ury outline several objectives in conflict resolution negotiations: separating the people from the problem, focusing on interests, evaluating a variety of possibilities before deciding how to deal with issues; and insisting that results should be based on objective standards.[24]

In the negotiation process, three variables in Burton's *human needs theory* must be taken into account: needs, values, and interests. According to Burton *needs* are universal human motivations conditioned by biology; *values* are ideas, customs and beliefs, characteristic of a particular community; and *interests* represent the aspirations of identity-based groups within a social system. Only interests can be negotiated through their re-articulation, while needs – such as recognition, identity, autonomy, belonging, security, and valued relations – must and can be pursued and achieved by all without the need for compromise. The human needs theory views analytical problem-solving workshops as the primary method for the conflict resolution. Key to this approach is the hypothesis that once relationships between disputants are analysed in depth, it is possible to reach solutions that are acceptable to all parties. The main goal of this theory is to reach a shared recognition of core needs by discovering shared objectives and finding ways to meet them through joint action. [25] Conflict transformation goes a step further, aiming at changing or transforming relationships which gave rise to conflict in the first place, thus opening the way to genuine reconciliation.[26] This involves both altering the inter-subjective identities of conflict parties as well as the structural conditions underpinning violent, latent or frozen conflict (e.g., social injustice, unequal development, discrimination, etc). It thus focuses mainly on intra-society reconciliation by identifying mid-level groups and empowering them to support a peace process and to influence peace efforts at grassroots levels.[27]

2.2.2. Goals and functions of civil society in conflicts and peace

[23] See Fisher, R. (1991), Negotiating Power: Getting and Using Influence, p. 128.
[24] See Fisher, R., Ury W. (1983), Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements without Giving In, p. 11.
[25] See Burton, J. (1990), Conflict: Resolution and Prevention, p. 23-36.
[26] See Ross, M. H. (2000), Creating the conditions for peacemaking: theories of practice in ethnic conflict resolution, p. 1023.
[27] See Paffenholz, T., Spurk, Ch. (2006), p. 20.

In view of these differing approaches and the limited role foreseen for CSOs in conflict management, in what follows we concentrate principally on conflict resolution and transformation approaches. Under these approaches, peacebuilding is viewed as long-term process that includes direct or mediated interactions between conflict parties, in order to find negotiated agreements to the primary issues at stake.[28] It also includes post-settlement peace consolidation aimed at a broader transition from negative to positive peace that leads to political pluralism, socio-economic justice and reconciliation.[29] This phase includes a wide range of activities: at grassroots level – community building, peace education, rehabilitation and public awareness work on human right protection and democratic values; at mid-range level – the promotion of a democratic culture, training for political organizations, training on conflict resolution, reconciliation workshops and socio-economic reconstruction.[30] The main task of peacebuilding is thus to achieve positive peace, a 'stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war.'[31] Particularly in the post-settlement phase, the focus lies principally on civil society. The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy sees the effort of this sector (track-two diplomacy) as important as efforts undertaken through bilateral programmes and intergovernmental organizations (track-one diplomacy).[32]

In peacebuilding processes, CSOs engage in different types of activities and work with different sectors of society (from top-level decision-makers to grassroots communities).[33] These actors can carry out small-scale projects to strengthen grassroots civic culture,[34] 'aim[ing] at overcoming revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence, transforming unjust social relationships and promoting conditions that can help to create cooperative relationships.'[35] They seek to 'engage representative citizens from the conflicting parties in designing steps to be taken in the political arena to change perceptions and stereotypes, to create a sense that peace

[28] See Darby, J., McGinty R., (eds.), (2000), The Management of Peace Processes, pp. 7-8.
[29] See Dudouet, V., (2008), p. 6.
[30] See Ropers, N. (1997), Roles and Functions of Third Parties in the Constructive Management of Ethnopolitical Conflicts, p. 26.
[31] See Haugerudbraaten, H., Peacebuilding: Six Dimensions and Two Concepts.
[32] See IMTD, IMTD's philosophy, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, 1998.
[33] See Chigas, D. (2007), Capacities and Limits of NGOs as Conflict Managers, p. 555.
[34] See Stephens, K. (1997), Building Peace in Deeply Rooted Conflicts: Exploring New Ideas to Shape the Future.
[35] See Bigdon, Ch., Korf, B. (2005), The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building.

might be possible, and to involve more and more of their compatriots.'[36] While being supported by foreign funds, genuine peacebuilding processes must be home-grown and cannot be imposed from outside.[37] The conflict transformation goals of civil society may be subdivided as follows:

- Developing a vision for a common future by engaging in public discussions about what kind of society and coexistence may be achieved;
- Facilitating dialogue between government leaders and civil society actors, which in turn help connect negotiations to the grassroots;
- Creating the scope for actual peace on the ground – expanding peace-building processes at local level to ensure an actual implementation of agreements signed by leaders and ensuing social reconciliation;
- Ensuring public participation and ownership of peace processes.[38]

To achieve these goals, CSOs and in particular human rights organisations, advocacy groups, peace networks, women and youth groups, professional associations, trade unions, community-based organizations, academic institutions and think tanks, and independent media and journalist associations carry out several functions. These include:

- Protection – protecting civilian rights against abuses by state structures; contributing to demobilization, disarmament or reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Intermediation and facilitation between the state and its citizens to ensure a balance between official structures and social networks; in peacebuilding processes intermediation takes place also between conflict parties;
- Monitoring official practices and structures, and the situation on the ground;[39]
- Socialization – socializing and training citizens into expressing their democratic rights; fostering democratic attitudes and practices among citizens through dialogue projects, peace education, exchange programmes, peace camps, and joint cultural events;

[36] See Chigas, D. (2007), p. 559.
[37] See Maiese, M. (2003).
[38] See Barnes, C., Civil Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace.
[39] See Document of the World Bank, (2006).

- Advocacy and public communication – defending interests, especially of marginalized groups, and bringing their problems on the public and peace agendas by advancing recommendations to decision-makers;[40]

2.3. NGOs as CSOs in conflict transformation

2.3.1. Value added and activities

Within the broad spectrum of CSOs involved in conflict and peace, a critical role is played by NGOs. Also here, there is no generally accepted definition of what and who constitutes an NGO. Generally NGOs are defined as private, self-governing, not-for-profit institutions working on political, social, economic, human rights, and conflict resolution issues.[41] Their members are usually individuals from private associations rather than governmental officials.[42] Paffenholz and Spurk argue that advocacy and public diplomacy are the main functions of NGOs, which they define as bringing issues relevant to the people on the political agenda through public campaigns or inducing civil society involvement in peace-building.[43] Local NGOs are key in this respect, in so far as they know the country well, including its local institutions and political culture.[44] Local NGOs can also:

- operate free from constraints of narrow diplomatic mandates and foreign-policy imperatives, focus on a long term issues which governments are unable and unwilling to do,[45] and enjoy lower political risks in case of failure,[46]
- operate in confidentiality without excessive media and official presence,[47]
- access areas, actors and constituencies inaccessible to official actors. Talk to all parties without losing face and provide a neutral forum for dialogue.[48] This

[40] See Paffenholz, T., Spurk, Ch. (2006), pp. 8-13.
[41] See Aall, P. (2001), What do NGOs: Bring to Peacemaking?, p. 367.
[42] See Jacobson, H. K. (1984), Networks of Interdependence: International Organisations and the Global Political System, p. 4.
[43] See Dudouet, V. (2008), p. 4.
[44] See Aall, P. (1996), Nongovernmental Organizations and Peacemaking, p. 443.
[45] See Tongeren, P. van. (1998), Exploring the Local Capacity for Peace – The Role of NGOs, p. 23
[46] See Neubert, D. (2004), The 'Peacemakers' Dilemma: The Role of NGOs in Process of Peace-building in Decentralised Conflicts, p. 61.
[47] See Fischer, M. (2006), Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges, p. 9.
[48] See Bakker, E. (2001), Early Warning by NGOs in Conflict Areas, p. 269.

includes talking to actors viewed as illegitimate or illegal by official institutions,[49]

- use access to the international community to increase its involvement in peacebuilding,
- interact and thus effectively represent grassroots interests and desires, mobilize public opinion, and create networks between civil society actors in conflict zones to galvanize political will at top political levels,
- raise awareness and incentives for peaceful coexistence by facilitating communication and building inter-communal relationships, changing values, re-evaluating historical narratives, eroding myths of the other party's resistance to peace,[50] and enemy images,
- create spaces for informal dialogue and facilitate official negotiations by providing technical and political assistance. When official talks fail, NGOs can continue dialogue and negotiations to generate new initiatives and maintain momentum,[51]
- generate know-how and ideas by offering in-depth information of the situation on the ground as well as on the experiences of other peace processes.

To capitalize on these potential assets, NGOs carry out several activities. These include problem-solving workshops, conflict-resolution training and capacity-building, truth and reconciliation commissions and other grassroots initiatives. Problem-solving workshops, undertaken in the tradition of conflict resolution, aim at reframing the conflict in order to yield win-win solutions. NGOs assist the parties in redefining their differences in terms of a problem to be resolved – rather than an incompatibility of subject positions – thus generating a mutually acceptable settlement for both sides.[52] Kelman notes that workshops can create a more differentiated image of the "enemy" and help the disputants discover potential negotiating partners on the other side.[53] The scope is also the encouragement and empowerment of young people to develop critical judgement and conflict management skills, by improving

[49] See Chigas, D. (2007), p. 561.
[50] See Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, Summary of PRIME Study of NGOs (2000/2001).
[51] See Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N. (1998), p. 111.
[52] See Baruch Bush, R. A., Folger, J. P. (1994), The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition, p. 56.
[53] See Kelman, H. C. (1990), Applying a human needs perspective to the practice of conflict resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian case, p. 189.

communication and interaction skills, an ability to analyse the conflict and transform it.[54] In this case the disputants are brought together in their personal capacities, rather than as representatives of their party. The meetings are generally closed to the public.[55]

Another approach to peace building is conflict-resolution training and capacity-building. Conflict-resolution training helps people develop knowledge and skills related to conflict resolution and transformation. It creates spaces for marginalized groups and assists in building relationships among divided communities.[56] Training changes the way that confronted parties view their conflict situation. It gives participants better skills in communication and negotiation, and makes them less susceptible to manipulation. Trainings can make use of several interactive modes, such as case studies, simulations, and discussion.[57] However in these meetings or trainings often participants tend to already have rather "moderate" views and it is difficult to include individuals on the "extremes" whose inclusion is critical to conflict resolution.[58] Capacity-building generally includes the provision of technical and logistical assistance for mediation efforts to the relevant actors as well as the enhancement of civil servants' skills in negotiations.[59]

Truth and reconciliation commissions instead are established to complement the negotiation efforts of official actors. They are generally considered to be "bodies set up to investigate a past history of violations of human rights in a particular country – which can include violations by the military or other government forces or armed opposition forces".[60] Such commissions do not have the power to punish but to promote reconciliation and provide more comfortable environment for victims. Truth and reconciliation commissions have greater access to top-level actors and increased assurance that its findings will be taken under serious consideration. Mid-level actors

[54] See Schell-Faucon, S. (2001), Conflict Transformation through Educational and Youth Programmes.
[55] See Chigas, D. (2007), p. 557.
[56] See Spangler, B. (2003), Problem-Solving Mediation. Beyond Intractability.
[57] See Babbitt, E. F. (1997), Contributions of Training to International Conflict Resolution, pp. 365-387.
[58] See Chigas, D. (2007), p. 575.
[59] See Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N. (1998), pp. 130-131.
[60] See Hayner, P. B. (1994), Fifteen Truth Commissions – 1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study, p. 558.

involved in these activities are often able to use their personal or institutional connections to move towards conflict transformation.[61]

While top-down approaches are decisive, peace must also be built from the bottom up. And in this respect mid-range CSOs display far more flexibility than top-level authorities, because they have access to the grassroots as well as to governmental leaders.[62] For precisely this reason some view CSOs as more suitable mediators than official governments.[63] Mid-range actors engaging at grassroots level seek to empower local communities to make decisions and formulate their own goals in conflict resolution[64] and to strengthen their capacity to address these goals and needs.[65] It is important that all groups, including the marginalized, should be involved in this process (but the participation of grassroots actors in these activities is limited or non-existent).[66] However effective peacebuilding requires the coordination between actors at all levels, including also between mid- and top-level actors.

2.3.2. Limitations of Civil Society Organizations

The civil society sector plays a critical and perhaps also decisive role in conflict resolution, but there are several criticisms and limitations of CSOs and their activities:

- CSOs are not always fully independent and may partly represent state interests or may be reluctant to criticize fully government policy openly;
- local CSOs often have a weak membership base and lack country-wide political or ethnic representation and thus at times reach only a limited number of people;[67]
- local NGOs operating without Western funds are generally less developed and have less institutional capacity[68] than those with external support and thus have a low level of sustainability;

[61] See Lederach, J. P. (1997), Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, pp. 47-51.
[62] See Ibid. (1997), p. 94.
[63] See Connie, P. (1998), Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organisations in Preventing Conflicts.
[64] See Boyce, W. Koros, M., and Hodgson, J., Community Based Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Peacebuilding, p. 5.
[65] See Erasmus, V. (2001), Relief Aid and Development Cooperation: Community Mobilization as a Tool for Peacebuilding, p. 247.
[66] See Pugh, M. Post-Conflict Rehabilitation: The Humanitarian Dimension.
[67] See Paffenholz, T., Spurk, Ch. (2006).

- not all CSOs respect values of internal democracy, transparency and accountability thus hindering their external legitimacy;[69]
- at times the civil society dimension is marked by weak networking and lack of coordination;
- CSOs generally do not have the capacity and power to change political incentives. They can only encourage resolution initiatives.[70] Their activities may be effective in conducting dialogue, but do not have the necessary political resources to bring about change.[71] In view of this lack of power political influence, often CSOs limit themselves to the role of consultants.[72]

3. Civil society in five conflict cases: an overview

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society had a hard time to emerge and consolidate, in so far as Soviet people had no experience in creating civic institutions. The third sector in Georgia started developing in the 1990s, yet it soon proved its strength with the Rose Revolution, in which it exerted considerable influence. This sector created a legal basis for the revolution by exposing mass fraud during the November 2003 parliamentary elections and then mobilizing public participation and protest.[73] Likewise civil society is one of the main players in Abkhazia alongside the *de facto* Abkhaz government. But there is a great imbalance between Georgian and Abkhaz civil societies. The war between the two had a considerable impact on the nature and trends in the development of Abkhaz civil society. The ensuing "no war no peace" situation; economic isolation caused by the decision to impose CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) economic sanctions in January 1996 (a decision reversed with Russia's recognition of Abkhaz independence in 2008); the information blockade, driven by limited access to global technologies and networks; uncertainty and low expectations for the future, generating apathy and passivity; and finally chronic stress and fear of renewed military action, have all contributed to hindering the development of Abkhaz civil society. However the ruling political

[68] See Fischer, M. (2006).
[69] See Document of the World Bank (2005d), Engaging Civil Society Organisations on Conflict-Affected and Fragile States. Three African Country Case Studies, pp. 10-16.
[70] See Chigas, D. (2007), p. 575.
[71] See Tongeren, P. van. (1998), p. 22.
[72] See Fisher, R. J. (1972), Third Party Consultation: A Method for the Study and Resolution of Conflict, pp. 67-94.
[73] See Nodia, G. (2005), Civil Society Development in Georgia: Achievements and Challenges.

leadership of Abkhazia tends to be tolerant and supportive of civil society activism. In Georgia the political situation is more favourable to civil society's democratic initiatives.[74] In Georgia civil society has received far greater external support than its counterpart in Abkhazia. Over the years numerous external foundations assisted the democratic transition process in Georgia through different development projects. The same was not done in Abkhazia, not least in view of legal complications (i.e., status questions). Further reasons for the poor development of civil society in Abkhazia relate to the lack of experience and the low level of intra-civil society interactions in Abkhazia.

Civil society organizations in Azerbaijan and in Armenia as in Georgia emerged in the mid 1990s. Considerable input was put by international and mostly Western foundations which were concentrated on democracy promotion in the post-Soviet space. Despite this Western engagement, a lack of civic activism is widespread among Azerbaijani society and political participation is quite limited, with an ineffective outreach by local CSOs to the general population. In addition, CSOs are not sufficiently diversified: the organizations with the largest membership bases include trade unions and educational organizations; research centres are poorly developed and lack professionalism. Other challenges facing Azerbaijani civil society are: low level of cooperation among CSOs; lack of interpersonal trust; weak international linkages (marking a difference with Georgia, where CSOs are far more internationalized); and local funds for their development are insignificant. The relationships with official structures are less developed, therefore civil society is not influential within the ongoing political processes and mostly acts as a passive observer; over time Azerbaijani civil society has developed its own self-censorship mechanisms and tries to avoid criticizing state elites.[75] The long lasting ethno-political conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia with territorial claims which resulted in the Armenian occupation of about 20% of Azerbaijan's territory, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts (rayons) and about one million internationally displaced people has impacted upon the development of civil society in Nagorno-Karabakh, where it had little chance to emerge. Karbakh was and remains closed to international

[74] See Popescu, N. (2006), Democracy in Secessionism: Transnistria and Abkhazia's Domestic Policies, p. 17.
[75] See Sattarrov, R. Faradov, T. and Mamed-zade, I. (2007), Civil Society in Azerbaijan: Challenges and Opportunities in Transition.

organizations. Besides, it is one of the world's most militarized places. Despite these circumstances some CSOs do operate, but their influence on the authorities, including both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, is insignificant.

In Armenia civil society is relatively more active. Domestic CSOs are active in designing programmes on issues such as democracy building, humanitarian assistance, healthcare, and trafficking. In these spheres they have gained recognition from the wider society. However their effectiveness in influencing government policy is limited, as the level of public participation in their activities is low. Their scarce influence on official authorities was proved also during the last presidential election of 2008, when the view of civil society activists had little bearing on the electoral campaign and results.[76] Armenian trade unions also play a limited role in political life, whereas business associations seem to be more active. The main problem facing the third sector in Armenia is related to financing questions, as civil society remains dependent on foreign donors or Diaspora funding.[77]

Likewise in Moldova, the civic activism and political participation in order to hold political leaderships accountable and demand greater government responsiveness are also low. Therefore the influence of civil society on political life is limited and lacks institutional capacity. At the beginning of the 2000s, Moldovan officials tried to marginalize this sector by establishing government-sponsored organizations as a counterweight to opposition CSOs.[78] Today, official Moldova seeks European integration and therefore tries to improve its relations with the third sector and cooperate with it on democracy and conflict resolution issues. In 2005 the Parliament presented a draft Concept on Cooperation between the Parliament of Moldova and Civil Society, which aimed at increasing collaboration in the early stages of lawmaking. Alongside this, external factors like the EU-Moldova Action Plan, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Programme, and the Moldova-NATO Individual Plan triggered greater civil society involvement in decision-making, although this instances of cooperation remain limited and unsatisfactory.[79] On the other side of the conflict divide Transnistria suffers from autocratic governance,

[76] See Armenia's 2008 Presidential Election: Select Issues and Analysis, A publication of Policy Forum Armenia.
[77] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit 2006 – Armenia.
[78] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit 2004 – Moldova.
[79] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Moldova (2006).

isolation, economic underdevelopment and organized crime.[80] CSOs in Transnistria began their activities in the mid-1990s with the creation of movements in defence of the Transnistrian region, so-called "ultra-patriotic" organizations in favour of independence.[81] Most of them were controlled by the MGB (a structure identical to the former KGB). In the early 2000s some local CSOs began to work on the promotion of democratic ideas and values, but they were restricted by the authoritarian regime. Local secret structures in general have tried to create obstacles for civil activism.[82] The Moldovan government is aware of these problems and is interested in the development of Transnistrian civil society; however it is against of any form of external involvement in this process, concerned that it would imply some form of international recognition of this region.

Civil society in Morocco has existed in different forms since independence, but it is only in the 1980s and 1990s that, along with economic liberalization, it evolved and reached its current structure.[83] Today, there are several associations that are different in their aims and fields of action: economic development, human rights, women rights and the fight against corruption. [84] However, civil society organizations (CSOs) are often perceived as "potential competitors" by political actors, who usually try to either exploit or undermine their capacities, by getting involved in their structures or linking them to political parties.[85] The King's attitude towards CSOs is mixed, depending on the kind of decision he has to take: in some cases the King has opted for the building of a broader consensus through an active participation of civil society; in other occasions he has completely excluded any involvement of these organizations.[86] In recent years, the government of Morocco has adopted a number of reforms in the area of freedom of association and assembly. According to the European Commission, these changes 'have led to the emergence of a more active and dynamic civil

[80] See Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2006).
[81] See Coppieters, B. (2006), The Question of Sovereignty in Multi-Track Diplomacy. The Case of Transnistria.
[82] See Asociatia PROMO-LEX: Research on Human Rights in Transnistrian Region of Moldova (2007).
[83] See Democratic development and Civil Society Movements in Morocco, Summary of the Study, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2005.
[84] See Gandolfi, P. (2003), La société civil au Maroc: signification et issues des processus de changement sociale et politique.
[85] Ibidem.
[86] Ivi, (2003), p. 5.

society'.[87] However, 'civil society organisations have been successful in bringing about change only when they have worked towards goals supported by the palace'.[88] There are also regulations restricting the freedom of the media, which is under the Ministry of the Interior and the Prime Minister's control. They have the power to suspend a publication if it is considered harmful to Islam, the monarchy, territorial integrity or public order, and the authors may incur fines or even be punished with detention.[89] In the last decade, a Sahrawi civil society in the occupied territories of Western Sahara has emerged. The starting point of the civil society movement is considered to be the student demonstration outside the administrative buildings in Laayoune in September 1999.[90] A new wave of intense protests, quickly baptised by the Polisario Front and its European support network as the "Sahrawi Intifada", erupted in 2005.[91] Moroccan authorities imposed heavy limitations on the freedom of expression and association in the occupied territories of the Western Sahara. Only in a few cases, such as protests over economic issues and human rights advocacy, some form of open activity by Sahrawi groupings has been allowed by the Moroccan regime.[92] At present, there are tensions within Sahrawi civil society between those activists that would like to continue with the current strategy focused on civil rights and those who call for a stronger and more politicized pro-independence protest.[93] Since 1975, Morocco has maintained a stringent control over the flow of information to and from Western Sahara, and restricting media access to the occupied territories. In the absence of free media, Sahrawi activists have extensively used alternative media and communications technology, such as camera-phones, internet and chat rooms.[94]

Civil society emerged in Israel only in the 1970s, in so far as the first two decades of the state's life were focused on centralization and collectivism.[95] In the late 1980s and in the 1990s, along with economic liberalization and the outbreak of first Intifada,

[87] See Commission of the European Communities, ENP Progress Report – Morocco, Brussels, 2006.
[88] See Comelli M., Paciello M. C. (2007), A cost-benefit analysis of the ENP for the EU's Southern parties.
[89] See United Nations Development Programme, Civil Society Country Profile, Morocco.
[90] See Zunes, S. (2007), Western Saharans Resist Moroccan Occupation, and Shelley, T., Burden or benefit? Morocco in the Western Sahara.
[91] See San Martin, P. (2005), Nationalism, identity and citizenship in the Western Sahara.
[92] Ibidem. (2005).
[93] See Shelley, T., Burden or benefit? op. cit.
[94] See Stephan, M. J., Mundy, J. (2006), A Battlefield Transformed: from Guerilla Resistance to Mass Nonviolent Struggle in the Western Sahara.
[95] See Hermann, T. (2006), Civil Society and NGOs building peace in Israel.

many associations flourished in Israel, promoting different values and needs: not only peace, but also civil rights and topics that were new to the Israeli public discourse (non-discrimination, the environment, etc).[96] Especially during the Oslo process, different groups for and against the conclusion of a peace agreement with the Palestinians were particularly active in Israel.[97] The Oslo process also led to the creation of a trans-national civil society, promoting the participation of other institutions outside the State of Israel.[98] When the second Intifada broke out in 2000, the Israeli state carried on the liberalization process, even counting on the thriving activity of local NGOs, which sometimes even substituted the state in important fields such as that of welfare.[99] This decentralization process provided also an opportunity for the Arabs within the state of Israel to take part in public discourse through the action of Arab NGOs and Arab civil society groups. Initially focussed on immediate basic needs (e.g., land expropriation), these groups have become increasingly active against the state's political, economic and social marginalization and discrimination against the Palestinian minority, by establishing alternative institutions and providing alternative services, approaching according to some a "state-within-a-state arrangement".[100] At present, Israeli civil society is divided along identity and ideological lines: on the one hand, there are exponents that sustain cultural pluralism and openness (including both Jewish Israeli and Palestinian Israeli groups); on the other hand, there are advocates of an exclusivist identity.[101] This tendency makes civil society in Israel weak and not as active as in the past, leaving room for a stronger engagement of the military society, that has been increasingly empowered to influence the ongoing conflict.[102]

Palestinian civil society is an atypical one, since it emerged and developed in the absence of a state.[103] Before the State of Israel was established, Palestinian civil society was mainly organized through charitable associations. Along with the birth of the State of Israel, there was a dispersion of Palestinians and thus of activists: those

[96] See Ben-Eliezer, U. (2005), The Civil Society and the Military Society in Israel.
[97] See Hermann, T. (2006). cit.
[98] See Simoni, M. (2008), "Payers" and "Players": European Institutions, National Governments and Civil Society in the Israeli-Palestinian ongoing confrontation.
[99] See Peled, Y. (2005), Civil Society in Israel.
[100] See Haklai, O. (2003), Decentralization, Civil Society and Ethnonationalism: Arabs in Israel.
[101] See Ben-Eliezer, U. (2005), cit.
[102] Ibidem.
[103] See Salem, W. (2006), Palestinian Civil Society: Characteristics, past and present roles, and future challenges.

who lived in Israel worked for the preservation of their national identity, while those living in Arab countries joined local parties and NGOs.[104] In the 1960s two major events led to a new flourishing of Palestinian civil society: first the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization; second, the occupation by Israel of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heighs and the Sinai in 1967. The PLO supported youth and women organizations and the activities in this period were mainly focused on basic assistance and relief.[105] An important change in Palestinian civil society occurred in 1988 with the outbreak of the first Intifada, which led to the convergence between the national liberation and the socio-economic agenda.[106] During the Oslo years, Palestinian civil society benefited from international attention and funding, above all focusing on activities linked to supporting the Oslo process. The establishment of the Palestinian National Authority also had a great impact on the civil society realm: on the one hand, the PNA established strong connections with CSOs; on the other, the PNA and CSOs became competitors in representing the Palestinian population and gathering external financial support. In 2000 a new law was approved – the "Law of Charitable Societies and Domestic Commissions" – establishing the right of NGOs to work via registration and not by permit.[107] At present, Palestinian CSOs fall within five main categories: political groups, voluntary cooperatives, mass voluntary organizations, trade unions and Islamic charity group.[108] However, the flourishing of local NGOs came to a halt with the explosion of the second Intifada in 2000. Over the course of the second Intifada and as epitomized by the success of Hamas in the 2006 elections, the role of Islamic CSOs has grown significantly.

3.1. CSO involvement in the Georgia/Abkhazia conflict

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western actors began focusing on the development of the CSO sector in Georgia. In the years of independence the number of CSOs reached several hundred, and was generally involved in advocating democracy and monitoring human rights, promoting conflict resolution and civic

[104] Ivi, (2006), p. 2.
[105] Ivi, (2006), p. 3.
[106] *Ibidem.*
[107] See Salem, W. (2006).
[108] See Adjeljaber, H., Palestinian Civil Society. From a de facto State to Disarray. What happened with Palestinian Civil Society after Oslo.

education. Some of the most important CSOs gained public recognition and political influence. These organizations are mostly Tbilisi-based NGOs and foreign funds remain critical to their activities. There is however a great imbalance between the number and level of development of CSOs in the capital and in provinces. The Samegrelo region is the only exception, which may be explained by the concentration of international donors near the Abkhaz conflict zone.

Beginning with the work of NGOs, the sustainability of NGOs in Georgia rose in the run-up and during the Rose Revolution, but has decreased since then. Many NGOs lost their distinct identity as they moved into government structures; many either have remained financially unstable or have depended excessively on foreign funds; the civil society sphere remains poorly coordinated and NGO interactions with the media has decreased impinging negatively upon the public resonance of these organizations; the centre-periphery gap in NGO development has also widened; newly established NGOs find it difficult to attract foreign funds and survive, while developed organizations have difficulties in retaining or finding qualified employees. Furthermore only some NGOs can provide full-time salaries for their staff and therefore staff members have more than one job. Consequently these persons are not fully engaged in their work. The same applies also to Abkhaz civil society activists.

All these factors impede NGOs to identify long-term projects and conduct strategic planning. Officials tend to constrain NGO watchdog functions. By contrast however, since the revolution the legal framework governing civil society organizations has improved and become supportive, by providing tax benefits and simplifying registration procedures that allow NGOs to operate freely. The law however does not include a mechanism for the State to provide funds to NGOs. Cooperation between the government and civil society is limited and the level of NGOs influencing official policy regarding conflict resolution issues (and not only) is low. Furthermore the interaction between officials and NGO activists largely depend on personal relationships and access to the ruling political leadership. From the government side, relations with civil society actors are also based on personal preferences. The

mechanisms and possibilities of NGOs to integrate society in policy debates and conflict resolution process are thus quite limited.[109]

In Abkhazia NGOs have been more isolated and this has impacted negatively on their engagement in civic peace initiatives with Georgian counterparts. There are about 200 NGOs registered in Abkhazia, but only 30 have regular ongoing projects and activities. In the Gali district a community of young NGO activists is working, serving as a bridge between Zugdidi and Sukhumi.[110] In most cases such organizations were created by the people affected by the conflict. These were local academics, teachers or journalists who engaged in peacebuilding initiatives, including humanitarian and trauma healing activities, human rights monitoring, arranging meetings between the confronted parties, elaborating programmes focused on the reintegration of ex-combatants in society, etc.[111] These activities have changed over time reflecting changing political dynamics on both sides. Most of these peace activities have been financed by foreign funds, although international foundations finance only Georgian/Abkhaz common projects and not initiatives by the Abkhaz side alone.

After the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict, a wide range of bi-communal and international civic peace activities were carried out. INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations) like International Alert (IA), Links, the Berghof Centre for Constructive Conflict Management and Conciliation Resources, as well as academics from the University of California, Irvine (UCI) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), have organized meetings, workshops, and trainings between confronted parties in order to foster dialogue. The main scope of such initiatives was generally to break down stereotypes among the people affected by conflict, stereotypes which are rooted since the Soviet past and reinforced by parental and social education in the current context. The topics of dialogue have been diverse, including current proposals from the official negotiating track (focused mainly on the status question), transition processes in multinational societies, the building of democratic institutions and good governance, international standards in human and minority rights, and positive examples of resolving ethno-political conflicts elsewhere.[112] In the framework of

[109] See USAID: The 2004, 2005, and 2006 NGO Sustainability Index: Georgia.
[110] See International Crisis Group, (2006), "Abkhazia Today".
[111] See Nan, S. A. (1999), Georgia-Abkhazia: Civic Initiatives, Conciliation Resources.
[112] See Ibid.

these activities civic actors from Georgia and Abkhazia participated in a study visit to Great Britain and Northern Ireland to examine political, security, and economic aspects of the Northern Ireland peace process and the participation of civil society in peace initiatives.[113] Generally these projects have included interactions between mid-range civil society actors. The impact of these initiatives has been limited. On the one hand, while being well connected to foreign donors, these local NGOs have had a limited outreach to the grassroots. Interactions with local communities have either not taken place of the people involved in wider outreach activities have been limited. On the other hand, the impact on track-one diplomacy has also been small. The lack of public debate about progress in the negotiations and discussions of possible compromises (from both sides) suggest that officials and civil society on the one side, and civil society and grassroots actors on the other have been divorced from one another. In other words, these mid-range initiatives have failed to ensure links and communications between top and grassroots levels.

Other areas of NGO activism related to the conflict have included work on IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), youth, and humanitarian and psycho-rehabilitation. For Georgian civil society actors the crucial issue has been the question of the right of refugees to return to their homes. Several NGOs work in this field. '*Assist Yourself*' researches into the social situation of the IDP community in Tbilisi and lobbies their case to the government in Georgia. In the framework of these activities, it has drawn up an information pack about the rights of refugees.[114] CIPDD (Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development) has implemented a project called "*South Caucasus experts' network for IDP-s return/restitution issues policy*".[115] The NGO "*Ojakh*" carries out "*Peacemaking School*" that aims to strengthen the peacemaking organizational potential of young leaders in the refugee/IDP communities through the *South Caucasus Network of NGOs*. Their other ongoing project "*Peacemaking Ways to Bring Together the Peoples of the Caucasus*" is focused on reducing distrust and tension in relation to the refugee/IDP issues in the South Caucasus, bringing together peoples and inducing the participation of IDPs and refugees in peacemaking processes. "*Ojakh*" also researches the actual problems facing refugees/IDPs in

[113] See Dbar, R., Prospects for Third Sector Development in Abkhazia.
[114] See Matveeva, A. (2000), The conflict prevention capacities of local NGOs in the Caucasus.
[115] See Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development: http://www.cipdd.org/index.php?sec_id=3&lang_id=ENG&limit=5.

Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.[116] A women NGO – *Cultural and Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi"* also works on the IDP question. Its members are women IDP from Abkhazia from various professions: teachers, economists, doctors, lawyers, journalists and housewives. This organization deals with economic education and small business development, women rights protection, people's diplomacy, and social psycho-rehabilitation. With the support of UNV (United Nations Volunteers), the Danish Refugee Council and the UK Embassy it has carried out meetings with women from "the other side of the conflict", to elaborate joint business projects and discuss the peaceful settlement of the conflict.[117]

Youth involvement in peace activities is essential, as youth is less vulnerable to entrenched political views than older generations. The *UMCOR* (United Methodist Committee on Relief) *Youth House* in Tbilisi and *UMCOR Youth House in Sokhumi* carried out a programme on Youth Leadership Skills Development in Conflict Prevention. The participants were young people who suffered as a direct consequence of the violent conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia. This included war victims in Abkhazia and IDPs in Georgia. The main objectives of the project were to promote peace and understanding between the peoples and to develop conflict resolution and prevention skills of Abkhazian and Georgian youth. This organization arranged also Summer Camps in Likani (Georgia) and Pitsunda (Abkhazia).[118] The Georgian refugee-organization '*Association of Displaced Women from Abkhazia*' under the direction of a Bulgarian NGO also carried out a youth project, in the framework of which children from both sides of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict were invited to a summer camp in Bulgaria in 1996.[119] The Centre for Change and Conflict Management *PARTNERS-GEORGIA* with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and United Nations of Georgia (UNAG) implemented the project "Building for the Future". The main objective of the programme was to engage youth in building democracy in Georgia including in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The function of Partners-Georgia in this project was to develop skills for youth groups, actively participating in summer camps and organizing training for peer trainers.[120] '*Civic Initiative – Man of Future Foundation*' and '*Samursakan*' instead promote young researchers in Abkhazia who

[116] See "Ojakh" home page: http://ojakh.caucasus.net/english/home.htm.
[117] See Cultural and Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi": http://www.fundsokhumi.ge/ge/.
[118] See Tbilisi Youth House Foundation: http://tyhfoundation.gol.ge/.
[119] See Francis, D., Ropers, N. (1999), Peace Work by Civil Actors in Post-Communist Societies.
[120] See "Partners-Georgia": http://www.partners.ge/eng/projects.php.

work on ethnic conflict issues. The level of the participation of youth in the activities of the third sector in Abkhazia is very low. It is connected partly with absence of organizational skills and the lack of capacity in applying for foreign funds.[121] The organizations do not have a permanent staff and mainly consist on young volunteers. These are however some youth initiatives focusing on human rights monitoring, democracy, mass media and education issues.[122] In the Gali district there is also the Daily Human Rights Youth Club.

Turning instead to CSOs working on humanitarian issues, we note how these generally attempt to take a neutral or even apolitical stance in the conflict,[123] defining their role as promoters of the basic rights of people. The task of such organizations is to gather information, visit vulnerable areas as observers, interview local community groups in order to gain spread awareness of cases of political and economic repression.[124] There are number of humanitarian CSOs in Georgia and Abkhazia which deal with issues such as hunger, rehabilitation and tuberculoses. Most of their activities in this field are financed by foreign donors. The '*Centre for Humanitarian Programmes*' is the most developed CSO in Abkhazia. Its fields of activities are: (1) providing emergency aid to the victims of the war, (2) trauma healing work for war-affected people, (3) production of audio-visual archives to document the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict, (4) capacity-building among local NGOs, (5) reintegration of ex-combatants. The Centre arranges trainings, seminars and workshops with foreign partners and co-organized the summer camp for Abkhaz and Georgian IDP children. It is engaged in several parallel projects with its Georgian counterparts.

Research foundations and the academic community can also make a valuable contribution to the theoretical discourse regarding the nature of internal conflicts and reasons why some conflicts escalate into war. Such communities can be involved in monitoring activities to provide key insights into the motivations, interests and beliefs of each party. They can also create opportunities for cross community exchanges and educational programmes.[125] Georgian research institutes publish extensively on conflict issues, although they are sometimes focused more on providing a historical

[121] See Gurgulia, M. (2000), Grajdanskaia Obshestvo v Abkhazii: Tendencii Rasvitiia.
[122] See Matveeva, A. (2000), p. 13.
[123] See Aall, P. (1996), Nongovernmental Organizations and Peacemaking, p. 435.
[124] See Aall, P. (2001), What do NGOs: Bring to Peacemaking?, pp. 370-71
[125] See Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N. (1998), p. 126.

justification for claims of different sides than on policy-oriented questions. Since 1997 the ICCN (International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation) initiated a scientific project called "The Network for Early Warning and Monitoring of Ethnic, Social and Religious Conflicts in Georgia." The main objectives of this research were to study the current situation in the conflict zones and prepare appropriate recommendations for the confronted parties. The ICCN also published several books about conflicts and conflict management in the South Caucasus. On the Abkhaz side we find the *Foundation for Citizens' Initiative and Future of Humankind* in Sokhumi and the *Center for Development of a Civil Society* in Gagra. Both organizations research the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, human rights, youth politics and democracy; they carry out programmes for students in secondary schools and universities. The sociological research group of the *Civic Initiative Foundation* has undertaken a survey among residents of the Gali region regarding their views on the resolution of the conflict. However, publications are often impeded when research results do not conform to the political positions of the political leadership.[126] Generally the ability of these Georgian and Abkhaz organizations to provide empirically-grounded research and research-informed recommendations is limited and often published material is unequivocally one-sided.

The media can also play a pivotal role in conflict contexts. It is an effective vehicle to disseminate analysis of political changes and ideas, it can communicate negotiating signals and interests between confronted parties, exert pressure on the leaderships, identify resources that may help resolve conflicts, establish networks and information exchanges, help deconstruct stereotypes and transform these into public acts of healing, and participate in reconciliation and social reconstruction efforts.[127] Radio stations can broadcast open debates and public discussions on issues relating to the conflict and its resolution and to work on reducing prejudices between the parties.[128] In the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the participation of the Georgian and Abkhaz media in conflict resolution efforts is hardly possible, in so far as these bodies are institutionally weak, financially unstable, and often the quality of journalism is very poor. Besides CSO activities do not attract press coverage. In Abkhazia in particular, Abkhaz activists often do not publicize their activities, fearing internal recriminations

[126] See Matveeva, A. (2000), p. 5.
[127] See Media Diversity Institute: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Media: Discussion Point.
[128] See Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N. (1998), pp. 122-23

for meeting and negotiating with their Georgian counterparts. Generally civil society actors from both sides participating in bi-communal activities risk being accused of treason and consequently their meetings and activities have no discernible macro impact. There are practically no channels for information exchange between the conflict parties. Only *Apsnypress* (Abkhazia), the *Black Sea Press* and the *Kavkaz Press* in Georgia cooperate with each other.[129] The mass media in Abkhazia is subsidized by the state, allowing the latter to control this sector. The news agency "*Apsnypress*", newspapers "*Respublika Abkhazia*" and "*Apsni*" are controlled by the state with editors being appointed by the ruling class. However there are some journalists who participate in bilateral meetings, trainings and seminars with their Georgian counterparts. Civil society activists in Abkhazia publish the journal '*Abkhazia: Grajdanskaia Obshestvo (Abkhazia: Civil Society)*'. Also *Chegemskaya Pravda* can be considered as an independent newspaper in Abkhazia. There is also a radio programme '*No Peace, No War*' on post-war life in the Abkhaz and Georgian communities. *Radio Soma* in Abkhazia produced 8 documentary programmes on contemporary issues in Abkhazia. *Studio Re* and AGTRK produced three films: a Georgian journalist in Abkhazia filmed "Abkhazia – a side in the conflict", an Abkhaz journalist in Georgia – "Expectations", and "Nagorny Karabakh" was filmed by a joint team in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. *Studio Re* was active also in the creation of the TV-Programmes "Chechnya, Abkhazia, Georgia", "Diversified Opinions" on the civil war in Georgia and "UNOMIG (United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia) in Georgia".[130] The online media is less developed and Russian television is the dominant source of information in Abkhazia. In Sukhumi the newly-established Russian-sponsored NGO produces the newspaper *Forum* which represents the views of the opposition, i.e., those close to former president Arzinba.[131] On a whole, the media in Abkhazia plays a limited positive influence on conflict resolution efforts. On the one hand, the control of the authorities explains why emphasis is regularly placed on positive internal developments.[132] On the other hand, Abkhaz society, while fully aware of its political, economic and social ills, fear internal destabilization,[133] thus

[129] See Matveeva, A. (2000), p. 6.
[130] See "Studio Re": http://www.itic.org.ge/studiore/abouten.HTML.
[131] See Lynch, D. (2006), Separatist Abkhazia and the EU.
[132] See Gurgulia, M. (2000), pp. 17-19.
[133] See Lepsaia, A. (2000), Situacia v Abkhazii kak Model Zamknutovo Obshestva pri Nalichii bneshnevo Konflikta. Faktori, bliaiushie na Urigulirovanie.

remaining passive or sceptical vis-à-vis the usefulness of citizens diplomacy.[134] Both societies are furthermore entrenched in their positions viewing reconciliation almost impossible.[135] However a campaign – "Sorry"/ "Hatamzait" launched by '*Human Rights in Georgia*' (a Tbilisi-based NGO) was very important in engendering trust between the parties. The main messages of this initiative included admitting and apologizing for past wrongs during the war and deconstructing enemy images.[136]

3.2. CSOs involvement in the Azerbaijan/Nagorno-Karabakh/Armenia conflict

Following 70 years of Soviet rule, Azerbaijan does not have a long tradition of democracy and civil society. In the Soviet period all social organizations were strongly controlled by official structures. Unlike Georgia, in Azerbaijan most of the population continues to view the state as the main defender of public interests and society acts like a passive observer of socio-political processes.[137] Hence the underdevelopment of the CSO sector in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, state structures hinder the development of Azeri civil society. This said there are approximately 2,100 registered NGOs, although only a much smaller number are operational.[138] Most of these organizations work on IDPs, human rights, gender, healthcare, peace, and environment-related issues. NGOs in Azerbaijan are polarized: some are clearly pro-governmental and have links with official structures, others are on the opposition. In general, the third sector is led by Soviet-era elites,[139] and often these organizations suffer from paternalism, nepotism, hierarchy, corruption and lack of transparency and accountability.[140] Local financial support to this sector is limited and CSOs are thus dependent on foreign funds.

The most influential CSOs in Azerbaijan are the Chief Spiritual Board of Caucasian Moslems and the Movement for the Liberation of the Occupied Territories. These two organizations enjoy widespread support from governmental structures hindering their independence. There is also the National Forum of NGOs, supported by the UNDP,

[134] See Garb, P. (ed.), (1999), The Role of Unofficial Diplomacy in a Peace Process.
[135] See Akaba, N. (2000), Grajdanskoe Obshestvo e Mirnie Iniciativi.
[136] See Human Rights in Georgia, (2007), Campaign – "Sorry" / "Hatamzait".
[137] See Sattarrov, R., Faradov, T. and Mamed-zade, I. (2007).
[138] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Azerbaijan 2008.
[139] See Gahramanova, A. (2007), Peace strategies in "frozen" ethno-territorial conflicts: integrating reconciliation into conflict management: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh.
[140] See USAID: The 2005 NGO Sustainability Index: Azerbaijan.

which coordinates NGO activities and consolidates their efforts in Azerbaijan. No political NGO, art organizations or sport association is assisted and encouraged by the Azeri government. In Armenia, according to the Ministry of Justice there are 3,964 registered NGOs, one-third of which are active.[141] Foreign foundations and the Diaspora are the main sources of funding for most NGOs. Generally Armenian CSOs are not directly engaged with conflict-related issues. NGOs such as YERITAC, the Civil Society Institute, Solidarity of Students-S.O.S., the Research Centre of Political Developments and the Armenian PR Association are mainly active in the field of democracy promotion, freedom of speech and mass media, human rights and the rule of law.[142] The government has also established government-operated NGOs (i.e., GONGOs), while at the same time it has excluded independent organizations from the policy-making process. Indeed the increased participation of so-called GONGOs (government nongovernmental organizations) in the observation of the parliamentary election process was notable.[143] In Nagorno-Karabakh there are about 85 NGOs, although the proprtion of active organizations is similar to those of Armenia and Azerbaijan. International donors are restricted in their initiatives to finance projects in this region for concerns over recognition. There are also no donor supported projects in the Armenian occupied territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh.

Generally in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh functioning NGOs are inefficient in achieving their objectives, facing financial as well as technical problems. They have limited impact in the promotion of democratic values such as tolerance, non-violence, transparency, freedom of the media, in holding the state accountable and informing and educating citizens. As in Georgia and Abkhazia, CSOs are often concentrated in capital cities and regional NGOs often lack basic infrastructure to operate. The political environment is also far from conducive to civil society development, in so far as registration procedures is very complicated.

In Azerbaijan civil society has faced several legal restrictions related to both to registration and to the protection of rights enshrined in the Constitution and in legislative acts. A survey carried out by the OSCE Office in Baku and the ICNL-Baku (The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law) showed that there have been at least

[141] See USAID: The 2005 NGO Sustainability Index: Armenia.
[142] See Gahramanova, A. (2007).
[143] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Armenia 2008.

600 organizations established in Azerbaijan that never registered. Some have not received any final decision or communication from the Ministry of Justice, in other cases, the letters of refusal failed to indicate the legal basis for their rejected applications.[144] Bureaucracy complicates matters further and in addition CSOs (including charities) do not enjoy tax preferences or incentives. The absence of a law on philanthropy is a major obstacle hindering CSOs activities in providing social services.[145]

Azeri organizations working on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict focus on top-level actors, paying minor attention to mid- and grassroots-levels. This is in line with the regime's position. The President of Azerbaijan H. Aliyev officially announced that 'for as long as we have not signed a peace agreement with Armenia there is no need for cooperation between our NGOs and Armenians'. When Kocharian and I resolve the issue… then let NGOs reconcile the two peoples'.[146] The position of official Baku is also to exclude the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiation process and concentrate only on Armenia as the occupier of Azeri territory. Only if Armenia were to abandon the negotiations would the option of including Nagorno Karabakh in negotiations become more realistic.[147]

In Azerbaijan the public increasingly favours a military solution to the conflict, and this position is also shared by civil society. For instance, the Karabakh Liberation Organisation (KLO) (approximately 10,000 members) supports a military solution to the conflict and believes that only through military action it is possible to regain the occupied territories. On 7 July 2008 the organization published a document: "Unified Position to Eliminate Consequences of Armenian Aggression toward Azerbaijan", which declares that 'peace talks should end and military operations should be launched'.[148] Some Azeri NGOs also oppose participation of Karabakh citizens in cultural initiatives. For instance, in 2006 Azeri NGOs sent a protest letter to the municipal government of the Turkish city of Kars for inviting folk groups from

[144] See International Center for Not-for-Profit Law: Problems of NGO Registration in Azerbaijan – a Survey Summary of Findings.
[145] See Sattarrov, R., Faradov, T. and Mamed-zade, I. (2007).
[146] See Hasanov, A., Ishkanian, A. (2005), Bridging divides: civil society peacebuilding initiatives.
[147] See the Association for civil society development in Azerbaijan: 'Baku thinks absurd to involve Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian Community in negotiations', (13.06.2008).
[148] See Association for civil society development in Azerbaijan: Document Developed in Azerbaijan to Cease Peace Talks on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, (08.07.2008).

Karabakh to participate in the city's cultural festival. The Azeri national soccer team even refused to host the Armenian team in Baku as part of the European qualification games in order not to appear to be cooperating with the Armenian government. The visit of the Azeri branch of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) to the leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh, in the framework of the "Gugark" youth summer camp, caused the protest of several Azeri NGOs and the mass media. Some local TV stations even accused representatives of the HCA of 'mis-educating [Azeri] youth', evidencing how public diplomacy and exchange programmes are strongly condemned in Azerbaijan and actors involved in these initiatives are viewed as traitors by the wider public.[149]

Armenia shares a similarly aggressive view regarding the peace process. In 2007 after the visit by Azeri academics and diplomats to Nagorno-Karbakh, about 50 Armenian organizations issued an open letter to officials opposing the return of any territory by Armenia and declared that 'any politician or public officer who should openly … demonstrate a willingness to surrender Armenian lands, will be regarded a national traitor…' [150] According one of the signatories, S. Martirosiyan, founder of the OpenArmenia web portal, 'three or four years ago, society was really tired of the Karabakh issue and wanted to think about the economy, but now people take a more radical position and this includes those who were more liberal and tolerant before'.[151] The Open Society NGO (Nagorno-Karabakh) and the European Integration NGO (Armenia) recently discussed parallels between Kosovo and Karabakh and the mechanisms to gain recognition based on the Kosovo model. In this respect, they offered to establish relations between Karabakh and Kosovo.[152] Pro-peace groups in Armenia, mostly supporters of Ter-Petrosian (leader of the opposition party), have been marginalized by pro-governmental propaganda.[153]

The participation of Azeri CSOs in conflict resolution efforts is rare. There are only some initiatives to be mentioned: youth-peace training projects, seminars and workshops, conflict resolution trainings for CSO activists, as well as humanitarian programmes for IDPs; the UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women)

[149] See Ismailzade, F. (2006), NGOs in Azerbaijan criticized for Contacts with Karabakh.
[150] See Krikorian, O. (2007), Armenia: Karabakh talks' failure leads to tougher civil society stance.
[151] Ibidem. (2007).
[152] See In Stepanakert the possibility of setting up relations with Kosovo was discussed (2008), KarabakhOpen.Com.
[153] See International Crisis Group, (2007), Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War.

programme "Women for Peace and Peace-Building" carried out with local NGOs; the conflict resolution programme supported by the US and projects by the APEAT Centre; the HCA, the Caucasian Refugee and IDP NGO Network, the Transcaucasus Women's Dialogue, the Society of Azerbaijan Women for Peace and Democracy in the Caucasus; the "Harmony" women NGO's initiatives in building negotiating and journalism skills. These activities are often criticized by the public.[154] According to Arzu Abdullayeva, co-chairman of the Azeri branch of HCA, in Azerbaijan there is ongoing repression against peace activists.[155] The IDPs are practically excluded from the sphere of civil society activity in view of the widespread belief that governmental structures are more effective in providing assistance to them. Nevertheless, some NGOs (the Sector of Displaced People of National NGO Forum, the Association of Lawyers of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Society for Protection of Rights of Women, and NGOs "Hayet" and "Umid") do provide direct albeit limited social, legal and trauma-healing support to refugees.[156]

Also Armenian CSOs are not directly engaged in conflict resolution, as they consider the conflict to be resolved and Nagorno-Karbakh as liberated.[157] While having been involved in peace projects, the Association of Investigative Journalists of Armenia uses the term "liberated territories" in its online publications to describe the seven regions around Nagorno-Karabakh which are currently under Armenian control, and advices the Armenian authorities to repopulate these territories with Armenians.[158] The organization Cooperation and Democracy deals with the conflicts in the Caucasus through the promotion of public debates on conflict-related issues. Individual journalists from Novan Tapan Infromation Agency and ApsnyPress have also participated in several conflict resolution activities.[159]

In Nagorno Karabakh, the most developed NGO is the *Helsinki Initiative-92*, with its main focus on democracy and civil society building. Its activities include also human rights and conflict resolution issues, prisoners of war, missing people and refugees.

[154] See Tohidi, N. (2004), Women, Civil Society, and NGOs in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan.
[155] See A strong protest for a peaceful conflict resolution in Nagorno-Karabakh by Arzu Abdullayeva (Azerbaijan), (2008).
[156] See Sattarrov, R., Faradov, T. and Mamed-zade, I. (2007).
[157] This echoes the positions of many Turks and Turkish Cyprriots up until the 21st century who believed that the Cyperus conflict had been solved back in 1974.
[158] See Krikorian, O. (2007).
[159] See Matveeva, A. (2000).

All these issues are dealt with by organizing seminars, workshops and trainings.[160] The *Helsinki Initiative-92* also carried out a project creating a database on missing persons from the war. In 1994 and 1995 it organized a meeting with Azeri NGOs, bringing ethnic Azeris to Stepanakert. *Youth Democracy* is another functioning NGO in Nagorno-Karabakh, which operates independently from any political movement and without any stable sources of finance. This organization is not directly engaged with the conflict however and its projects contribute more generally to the development of civil society in Karabakh and the promotion of human rights.[161]

In general civil society on all sides tends to carry out one-sided projects and is not interested in collaboration. One lone exception is the *Resource Center of Stepanekert*, which held a lecture on the role of society in conflict resolution and the importance of maintaining contacts with Azerbaijan particularly at non-governmental level. Within such a political context, grassroots engagement has been minimal and no real efforts have been made to connect the grassroots to the peace process and top-level actors. NGOs reach a small segment of the population and consequently public participation in conflict resolution is small. In addition, dialogue between CSOs and official structures on conflict issues has been restricted and infrequent. Some peace initiatives were undertaken by international organizations, including the *Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils*, the *Migration Sector Development* project funded by IOM, and UNIFEM, which together with regional NGOs organized capacity-building seminars and trainings, conducted research studies on conflict-related issues, carried out a regional project on "*Women for peace and conflict prevention in South Caucasus*", and facilitated meetings between Azeri and Armenian journalists.[162] Since 2003 *International Alert* together with *Catholic Relief Services*, *Conciliation Resources*, *International* and LINKS have also worked on the Karabakh conflict. Their main objectives are the promotion of political dialogue, strengthening civil society, the free media and public awareness. In the framework of these initiatives, this consortium has attempted to create and expand networks of civic leaders working on conflict resolution in order to enhance the role of local communities in the process, and to create a long-term strategy to sustain civil society engagement in conflict resolution.

[160] See Chauffour, C. (2004), The Civil Society is getting organised. And stands out.
[161] See Gusep, T. (2004), Civil Society: "The youth has to overcome its inertia".
[162] See Gahramanova, A. (2007), Peace strategies in "frozen" ethno-territorial conflicts: integrating reconciliation into conflict management: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh.

To achieve these goals the consortium has held a series of seminars, trainings and workshops.[163] *Conciliation Resources* supports Nagorno-Karabakh's most widely-read newspaper *Demo* and provides an exchange of articles by Azeri and Armenian journalists about the conflict and the peace process, published in each country's press.[164] In 2006 *Conciliation Resources* launched an initiative called *Dialogue through Film* aimed at encouraging dialogue through short films about each parties situation.[165] Another initiative is *Radio Diaries*, which includes 20 radio stations and over 40 journalists working in Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Its main goal is to break-down stereotypes among societies.[166] In 2004 the Friedrich Naumann Foundation of Germany, the Yerevan Press Club and "*Yeni Nesil*" organized a roundtable "*Armenia-Azerbaijan-Turkey: Looking for Reconciliation*", which discussed compromise solutions to regional problems. Several meeting were held among Azeri, Armenian, and Nagorno-Karabakh journalists in the framework of the project "Karabakh conflict in the mirror of media and public opinion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mountainous Karabakh", but without any concrete results.[167]

In Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia there are few research institutes working on conflict resolution issues. Research centres concentrate mainly on human rights protection, training for target groups, election monitoring, legal assistance and consultancy. Yet even in these field their projects are underdeveloped. The most alarming fact in the conflict is that research and academia feeds rather than diffuses "enemy images" and much time and money is spent "informing" the international community about the crimes committed by the other side and the fact that the "other" does not have a historical justification to its territorial claims.[168] For example, the Armenian research institute *Dialogue Center for Culture Study* is concerned more with historical reconstructions by carrying out a project on the study of monuments of Artsakh 4 BC-3 AC rather than with reconciliation efforts.

[163] See International Alert in the Caucasus: Armenia/Azerbaijan: A Consortium Initiative for the Nagorny Karabakh conflict resolution process, (December 2006).
[164] See Conciliation Resources: What we do on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.
[165] See Conciliation Resources: Breaking down barriers through film.
[166] See Conciliation Resources: South Caucasus Radio Diaries project.
[167] See Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey: The dialogue Continues, (2004).
[168] See Khachatrian, H. (2007), The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Perspective of a Year-Longo Deadlock.

The media in all three parties contributes to the dissemination of stereotypes and enemy images and rarely focuses on civil society activities. According Freedom House, the press in Azerbaijan is "not free".[169] *Bakinskiy rabochiy* is pro-governmental and has the least number of news items related to civil society activity.[170] ANS, the leading private Azerbaijani TV and radio company, opens its daily news programmes with the words: 'Armenia's aggression towards Azerbaijan continues'. Pro-governmental media constantly tries to discredit NGO peace activists, particularly those who meet with their Armenian counterparts.[171] However, there are some NGOs promoting press freedom in Azerbaijan. These include the *Press Council of Azerbaijan*, the journalist association "*Eni Nasil*" and the *Union of Journalists*, *Democratic League of Journalist*, *Baku Press Club*. These organizations try to promote the self-sufficiency of the media, aid media outlets in developing methods to collect information from governmental structures, improving their finances and following tax regulations. These organizations are also active in monitoring and observing journalists' rights, examining the laws on the media and freedom of speech, and press state structures to improve existing legislation in this field. Furthermore, newspapers such as *Zerkalo* and *Ganjabasar* generally tend to favour the third sector and regularly publish information on its activities. In Armenia, the media has no access to the official negotiation process and for this reason only official information about the meetings are published. Generally the Armenian media avoids providing evaluations of such events.[172] According to the representative of the NGO "*Helsinki Initiative-92*" Karen Ohanjanyan there is a lack of independent media in Armenia, no sources are able to give complete information about the political situation in the country.[173] The Armenian media promotes the belief that the Karabakh conflict is over. The mass media in Nagorno-Karabakh is underdeveloped. The population watches satellite TV, mainly Armenian, Russian, Azeri, Turkish and Iranian. The newsletter *Azat Artsakh* is pro-government, one of the journalists there admits that self-censorship is common in order to avoid provocations and conflicts with the authorities.[174] By contrast, *Demo*, *Chto Delat*, and *Martik* are non-governmental, but

[169] See Freedom House, Country Reports, Azerbaijan, 2003-2005.
[170] See Sattarrov, R., Faradov, T. and Mamed-zade, I. (2007).
[171] See Grigoryan, M. Shahin, R. (2005), Between freedom and taboo media: coverage of the Karabakh conflict.
[172] See Karabach Conflict and Prospects of its Resolution, (2003).
[173] See Interview with Dr. Karen Ohanjanyan, Coordinator of the Nagorno Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92".
[174] See Chauffour, C. (2004), Self-censorship in order to avoid that war restarts.

they reach a very limited audience. *KarabakhOpen.com*, an online newspaper that analyses political, economic conflict-related issues is also operational. However, the population of region has little information about developments "on the other side", not least because of the impossibility of travelling directly from Azerbaijan to Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia, or even to telephone across the conflict divides.[175]

3.3. CSOs involvement in the Moldova/Transnistria conflict

At present in Moldova there are about 3,700 registered NGOs,[176] but only a few have the capacity to contribute to public policy and even these often lack credibility within society. In addition the legislative and tax frameworks do not encourage external foundations to make donations, and discourage CSO registrations. The Moldovan government also tends also to use the media in its own interest and discriminates against the independent media. All these factors impede CSOs from fully exploiting their capabilities. Under these circumstances civil society in Moldova has not become a vibrant sector in the country. Civil society in Transnistria remains weak and both the activities of local CSOs and of international foundations are severely restricted in view of the strict control of the security services. Financial sustainability of Moldavan and Transnistrian NGOs remains limited, most are dependent on foreign donors and often cannot attract and maintain high levels of professionalism, particularly when based outside the capitals. The internal organizational and management structures of CSOs is weak, their advocacy capacity is limited and there is no efficient coordination between CSOs.

The number of NGOs involved in conflict resolution is difficult to estimate as formally registered NGOs in Moldova do not provide any information about their activities.[177] There is practically no interaction between Moldavan and Transnistrian NGOs, not least because of the tight cap on Transnistrian organizations. In 2006 the President of Transnistria issued a decree prohibiting external financing of local NGOs that are directly "engaged in political activities".[178] Besides this both civil societies operate within a context in which the local populations are not (in the case of

[175] See International Crisis Group, (2005), Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground.
[176] See Institute for Public Policy: European Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, 2007, Chisinau.
[177] See Coppieters, B. (2006), The Question of Sovereignty in Multi-Track Diplomacy. The Case of Transnistria
[178] See U.S. Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights and Practices in Moldova.

Transnistria) or insufficiently (in the case of Moldova) interested in reconciliation and reintegration. According to one survey 62% of Moldovan respondents are ready to give up territorial claims in order to speed up the process of Moldova's integration into the EU.[179]

In general NGOs and research institutes are engaged with projects related to European integration and not with conflict resolution issues. In Transnistria there are some NGOs working on democracy, social and educational issues, but their activities are restricted by isolation, limited resources and scant knowledge of the basic principles of the values they promote. However even these NGOs are restricted by government in providing legal advice and other forms of assistance. It is practically impossible to organize joint meetings, seminars or workshops with Moldovan counterparts. For instance, in July 2005 the chairman of the *Moldovan Helsinki Committee* was attacked by pro-government forces when he tried to attend a human rights roundtable in Transnistria.[180] Travel to the separatist region is restricted by the authorities. The Chisinau-based NGO *Promo-Lex* stated that its members were stopped several times when attempting to enter Transnistria.[181] Despite all these hindrances, some civil society activists managed to create NGOs which are registered in both Moldova and Transnistria and they have established a bank account in both Chisinau and Tiraspol that allows them to apply for foreign grants.[182] The *Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation* (JCDC), a local NGO run by activists from both the Moldova and Transnistria communities, has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between the parties. It organized a festival of folk music and initiated the "Bridge of Trust" project, a mutual ecological programme for the preservation of the Dniestr river. JCDC works particularly on bringing together younger generations of the two opposing side, believing it may take another generation to find a settlement to the conflict.[183] Another active local NGO is the Resource Centre of Moldovan Non-governmental Organizations for Human Rights. In 2007 the Centre organized a roundtable for 15 NGO leaders from Moldova and Transnistri, discussing the lessons learnt from 15 years of civil society work on conflict issues as well as visions to transform the conflict and civil society's

[179] See Moynihan, J. (2008), Freedom and democracy: The only choice for Transnistria.
[180] See Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2005).
[181] See U.S. Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights and Practices in Moldova.
[182] See Popescu, N. (2006).
[183] See Havermans, J. (2002), Moldova Peace Organisations Search for Lasting Settlement.

contribution to it. The Centre also carries out the Cooperative Peace Project to strengthen capacity for peacebuilding work within Moldovan and Transnistrian CSOs.[184]

In terms of youth work, the *Millennium Institute for Education and Development* and the *Development Center for Transnistria* (Promo-Lex Association) have carried out several initiatives. They have organized a workshop on "Strategic Planning" to strengthen youth on both sides, conducted a seminar on "Civic participation" and "Partnerships (NGO, private and governmental sectors)" for youth organizations, including both *Local Youth Councils* and initiative groups from Transnistria.[185]

In the early 2000s the Moldovan government exerted pressure on both the state-owned and independent media. The Moldovan media has also faced economic pressures such as high tax burdens.[186] According to US Department of State, the government in Moldova continues to control the mass media by distributing broadcast licenses. However there are also oppositional newspapers such as *Flux, Timpul, Jurnal de Chisnau* and *Zierul de Garda,*[187] which criticize state policies and practice relatively freely, including also newspapers supporting Transnistrian separatism.[188] The media coverage of CSO activities is underdeveloped. The media often describes civil society actors as donor-driven and money-laundering groups.[189] The *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED) financed the creation of the *Centre of Education, Information, and Social Analyses*. Its bilingual journal *Civic Forum* is a unique source which provides information about civil society development and NGO activities. However it provides no information about civil society engagement in conflict resolution.[190]

[184] See Resource Center of Moldovan Non-governmental Organisations for Human Rights: Civil Society Strategy Report for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation in Moldova-Transnistria.
[185] See Resource and Development Center for Transnistria, RDCT Bulletin.
[186] See Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Moldova (2004).
[187] See U.S. Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights and Practices in Moldova.
[188] See Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), The Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti, (2004), Assessment Visit to Moldova: Observations and Recommendations.
[189] See Freedom House: Nation in Transit – Moldova (2008).
[190] See Center for Education, Information and Social Analyses from Moldova: Project "Strengthening Civil Society in Transnistrian region of Moldova".

The independent media practically does not exist in Transnistria. Nearly all media outlets are state-owned or state-controlled. A state editorial committee, which includes the ministers of security, justice, foreign affairs, and information, oversees the activities of all print and electronic media. Those who tend to be independent have been restricted. The editorial staff of the newspaper *The individual and His Rights* has experienced intimidation and violent attacks. Sometimes official structures have confiscated copies of independent newspapers. Under such circumstances journalists exercise self-censorship.[191] The promotion of NGO activities through press releases and public debates is impossible.

3.4. CSOs involvement in the Western Sahara conflict

CSOs in Morocco and in the occupied territories have played a limited role in the conflict resolution process. In Morocco, this has been due mainly to the state's strict control over civil society, but also to the widespread consensus among the Moroccan population on the fact that Western Sahara is and should remain an integral part of the state's territory. [192] In the Western Sahara, NGOs rights of access and movement have always been restricted. Nevertheless, Sahrawis have succeeded in establishing an active movement for the mobilization of international solidarity with the Sahrawi cause and the protection of human rights of the Sahrawi population in the refugee camps in Tindouf, in south western Algeria, and abroad.[193]

In the Western Sahara, the Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) is a network of organizations and activists with members in more than 30 countries, researching and campaigning foreign companies working for Moroccan interests in occupied Western Sahara. Believing that the occupation of Western Sahara will not end so long as Morocco profits from it, WSRW conducts an international campaign to reaffirm the sovereignty of the Sahrawi people over their natural resources and to break the link between the exploitation of natural resources and the de facto funding of the Moroccan occupation. In particular, they ask foreign companies to refrain from entering into business deals with Moroccan companies or authorities for investments

[191] See Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2007).
[192] See Leenders, R. (2000), Western Sahara: Africa's last colony, Searching for Peace in Africa.
[193] Ibidem. (2000).

in the occupied territories.[194] Another initiative promoted by Sahrawi groups in 21 EU member states is the campaign Fish Elsewhere!, which seeks to stop the controversial fisheries agreement that the EU negotiated with Morocco, allowing EU vessels to illegally fish offshore the occupied Western Sahara under the EU-Morocco agreement.[195]

Sahrawi human rights associations mainly work in cooperation with groups based in Europe, the US and Australia, and carry out an intense campaign within the United Nations. A number of these organizations campaign against the violations of human rights perpetrated by the Moroccan state in Western Sahara and against Sahrawi citizens in Morocco. The Moroccan government systematically refuses to give to Sahrawi organizations the permission to operate in the state's territory: therefore, they usually operate illegally, with activists occasionally subject to arrests and harassment, while others are mainly active in exile. The Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State (ASVDH) was created in 2005 by a coalition of Sahrawi human rights defenders. This association advocates justice for the Sahrawi people who have been victims of human rights violations as a precondition for a reconciliation and resolution of the Western Sahara conflict. ASVDH has been refused recognition by the Moroccan authorities and is thus forced to operate illegally in the Moroccan-occupied parts of Western Sahara.[196] The Association for the Families of Saharawi Prisoners and the Disappeared (AFAPREDESA) was constituted in 1989 in the refugee camps of Tindouf. AFAPREDESA has also been banned by the Moroccan government due to its close ties with the Polisario Front, but even so it continues working in the occupied territory and even within Morocco proper. It participates in the UN Human Rights Council and is an observant member for the African Commission of Human Rights.[197] Finally, the National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW) is a well-established women association, which was created in 1979 on the initiative of the Polisario Front and currently includes 10,000 female members based in the camps of Tindouf, in the Western Sahara and abroad. Its main tasks are the protection of women rights and the promotion of their role in Sahrawi society, but also the campaign for the

[194] See http://www.wsrw.org/.
[195] See www.fishelsewhere.org.
[196] See ASVDH website: http://asvdh.net/english/?page_id=438.
[197] See AFAPREDESA website: http://www.afapredesa.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=6.

independence of the Western Sahara from Moroccan occupation and the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi population. At national level, it provides assistance to alleviate the suffering of women facing abductions, torture and imprisonment in the occupied territories, promotes initiatives for the empowerment of Sahrawi women in the social and political fields and mobilizes Sahrawi women to reinforce their role in the struggle for the liberation and independence of the Western Sahara. At international level, it promotes human rights, gender equality and democracy and organizing worldwide support for Sahrawi women and the Sahrawi cause.[198]

On the other side, there are several Moroccan NGOs that focus on the fight against human rights abuses by the Polisario Front. Their most severe accusations concern the imprisonment, killing and the abusive treatment of Moroccan prisoners of war, but also the lack of freedom of movement and expression for the population in the Tindouf refugee camps. These organizations include, among others, the Moroccan Committee for the Regrouping of the Saharan Families (COREFASA), the Association of the Moroccan Sahara, the Association of the Parents of Sahrawi Victims of Repression in the Tindouf Camps (PASVERTI) and Al Massira Association for the defence of the rights of Moroccan prisoners and detained persons in the Tindouf camps. Some of these organizations also recently campaigned for the inclusion of Moroccans – allegedly of Sahrawi descent – within the list of voters for the referendum sponsored by the UN on the status of the Western Sahara.[199] There is also an increasing willingness of Morocco's human rights defenders to cooperate with their Sahrawi counterparts and joint initiatives were recently promoted by both former Moroccan and Sahrawi disappeared and their families. The Associations Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme (AMDH), a Moroccan non-profit human rights NGO founded in 1979, has recently taken up Sahrawi cause of human rights violations and works closely with Sahrawi human rights activists in calling for the accountability of Moroccan government in the Western Sahara.[200] Moreover, several Sahrawi students in Morocco actively cooperate with Moroccan human rights organizations, journalists and leftist activists.[201] These initiatives continue to be obstructed by the Moroccan government. For example, the Sahrawi branch of the Truth and Justice Forum, a

[198] For more information, see NUSW website: http://www.arso.org/UNFS-Homepage.htm.
[199] See Leenders, R. (2000), op. cit.
[200] See AMDH website: http://www.amdh.org.ma.
[201] Stephan, M. J. and Mundy, J. (2006), op. cit.

Moroccan grouping of former prisoners and disappeared, was dissolved in 2003 and its members arrested.[202]

Nevertheless, there are still several Sahrawi members in the organization. A Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Committee (IER), the first truth commission in the Middle East, was established by royal decree in 2004. At the end of 2005, the IER released its final report and submitted it to King Mohamed VI, detailing the contents of the commission's public hearings and investigations into the disappeared in the period 1956-1999. However, in a report published by Freedom House in 2006, it emerges that 'the only public hearing scheduled to take place in Western Sahara was cancelled and only a tiny fraction of the cases described by witnesses and victims related to Western Sahara'.[203]

A GONGO initiative worth mentioning is also the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS) has been recently created on the initiative of the Moroccan government 'to seek input from all parties affected by the 30 year old political stalemate to find the most effective path towards autonomy for the southern provinces within the framework of Morocco's long-established sovereignty'.[204] CORCAS is constituted by 140 members, representing ethnic, political and tribal groups in Moroccan society, which are all appointed by the King. Notably, the father of Polisario leader Mohamed Abdelaziz is a member of CORCAS.[205] This newly-created body seeks to overcome the stalemate in the negotiations with the Polisario Front and the Algerian authorities, which have refused to engage in dialogue with CORCAS and deal directly with the Sahrawi people in the occupied territories, in the refugee camps in Tindouf and abroad. CORCAS tries to carry out its tasks by relying on tribal and family links between Sahrawis to open channels of communication, including with those with members of the Polisario Front who oppose their leader's strategy.[206]

[202] See the King's decision, available at http://www.arso.org/docu/acteengl.htm.
[203] See http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/WoW/2006/Morocco2006.pdf.
[204] See CORCAS: a Culture of dialogue and consensus in Morocco, available at http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com/subject_area.php?sub_id=15.
[205] See CORCAS website: http://www.corcas.com/Default.aspx?alias=www.corcas.com/eng.
[206] See Maouelainin, M. A., CORCAS, (2007), A vital player in the Western Sahara conflict.

Turning to the media, the Moroccan media towards the Western Sahara conflict tends to depict the Moroccan proposal of "Substantial Autonomy" for Western Sahara as an advanced form of self-determination. The press is largely in line with the government position and usually refrains from offering critical analysis on the question. This is due both to journalists' own conviction and self-censorship as well as to government censorship. Moroccan official sources usually tone down and depoliticize the Western Sahara issue, for example by presenting the activity of separatist groups in the "southern provinces" as an extreme consequence of socio-economic problems that affect the area.[207] There are a few exceptions to this however. In April 2000, the Moroccan journal *Le Journal* published an interview with Polisario leader Mahumad Abdel-Aziz and calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The magazine was subsequently banned and its editor received stern warnings from the Interior and Information Ministries. Moroccan governmental homepages dealing with the Western Sahara issue include: the Maghreb Arabe Press (MAP), the news service of the Moroccan government, Sahara Marocain.net, a news portal including articles on Western Sahara and advocating the territorial integrity of Morocco, Western Sahara Online.net, which provides 'all the information and the facts that the world public should know about the Moroccan identity of the Sahara' with the aim of 'show[ing] the lies and misleading information given by the so-called "Polisario Front" and their stalling tactics', and Speak for Sahrawis.com, reporting the testimonials of Sahrawi people oppressed by the Polisario Front. Another GONGO, the Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP) has been established in Washington D.C. on the initiative of the King, whose mission is to inform opinion-makers, officials and the interested public in the US about political and social developments in Morocco, its foreign policy, but also the Western Sahara.[208] Its website headlines include the activities of the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), development programmes undertaken by Morocco to improve the social, economic and security environment in Western Sahara, human rights violations in the Tindouf camps and the Polisario Front's obstructions of negotiations for the resolution of the conflict.

On the Sahrawi side, the Sahara Press Service is the multi-lingual press and propaganda arm of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the government in exile of

[207] See San Martin, P. (2005), op. cit.
[208] See http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com/about_macp.php.

Western Sahara. It mainly reports on government-related news and current affairs, both from within the territory and the Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria.[209] The Sahrawi Journalist and Writers Union is also very active in the dissemination of information on the Western Sahara from the Sahrawi point of view. This group also has a webpage (http://www.upes.org). Internet has been extensively used by Sahrawi activists to overcome the strict control and the limitations in their freedom of expression and association imposed by the Moroccan government. ARSO (Association de Soutien à un Référendum Libre et Régulier au Sahara Occidental) can be considered as the official homepage of the international solidarity movement for Western Sahara: its website contains information on the Sahrawi population and the Western Sahara, including a comprehensive overview of all Western Sahara organizations worldwide.[210] There are many documents, pictures and videos posted on different websites by Sahrawi activists to denounce abuses and tortures by the Moroccan police and to sensitize the public on the Sahrawi cause.[211] The government of Morocco has normally reacted by blockading internet access to these sites both in Morocco and in Western Sahara. Since November 2005, Morocco began censoring all political websites advocating Western Sahara's independence.[212] Reporters Without Borders denounced the decision to block these websites as a serious violation of free expression and recommended to use an online proxy such as http://www.anonymizer.com to sidestep the filtering. As a reaction to this, the government of Morocco added the service to its Internet blacklist.[213] Another English homepage made by Sahrawi refugees in the US is "Western Sahara Online".[214] There are also several blogs managed by Sahrawi refugees worldwide that disseminate information on the Sahrawi people and its culture, and support the struggle for independence.[215]

3.5. CSOs involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

[209] See http://www.spsrasd.info/fr/main3.php.
[210] See http://www.arso.org.
[211] They include: http://www.arso.org, http://www.cahiersdusahara.com, http://www.wsahara.net and http://www.spsrasd.info.
[212] See Everyone's interested in the Internet - especially dictators. Introduction Internet – Annual Report 2006, Reporters without borders for press freedom, available at http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=578.
[213] See http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/70962/?PHPSESSID=ac1beef74622486a8f.
[214] See http://www.wsahara.net.
[215] Some examples are http://w-sahara.blogspot.com, http://onehumportwo.blogspot.com, http://saharawiyazeina.blogspot.com/.

Conflict resolution in Israel has traditionally been considered the exclusive competence of the government and the military, which has retained a monopoly on these critical issues at least until the 1970s. Israeli elites were considered as the only legitimate actors to deal with peace and war, and the state was organized on the basis of centralist and collectivist tendencies. Activities carried out by CSOs were viewed as against the state's interest and as such discouraged, while political parties were the only recognized channels for public expression and demands.[216] Open civil discontent towards this traditional security thinking erupted in the mid-1970s. During these years, the largest right-wing fundamentalist group to date, Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), and the largest peace movement to date, Peace Now, on opposing ends of the Zionist camp, were both founded, together with smaller CSOs, in this period.[217] Both Zionist left- and right-wing groups emerged during the Lebanon War (1982) and reached maturity during the first Palestinian Intifada (1987), although the 1991 Gulf war diminished their activism.[218]

Labour's 1992 electoral victory and the signing of the Oslo Declaration of Principles in 1993 represented a turning point in the attitude of Israeli governments towards the peace talks and had significant repercussions on the civil society realm. CSOs on the right judged the shift in the government's strategy as extremely dangerous, joining forces with right-wing parties to organise massive anti-Oslo campaigns. At the same

---

[216] See Hermann, T. (2006), op. cit.

[217] Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) was established in 1974: it claims the right to settlement in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights as part of Israel. The movement's mobilizing structures have included state-funded religious schools, military units, and both formal and informal social networks. Skilful exploitation of available political opportunities, mobilizing structures and ideological framing have allowed the movement to implement its programme of settlement within the occupied territories in the face of substantial domestic and international opposition. The ensuing radicalization and terrorism of members of the movement resulted into violent acts during pivotal phases of the peace process such as Camp David, Oslo and Israel's 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. (See M. Munson, *Gush Emunim and the Israeli Settlers of the Occupied Territories: A Social Movement Approach*, in Strategic Insights, available at http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2008/Apr/munsonApr08.asp). Peace Now was founded in 1978: it claims the right of both Israel and Palestinians to live within secure borders, recognizes the Palestinian right of self-determination and advocates the creation of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied as a result of the 1967 war. Peace Now currently operates through public campaigns, advertisements, petitions, distribution of educational materials, conferences and lectures, surveys, dialogue groups, street activities, vigils and demonstrations. A particularly important ongoing project of Peace Now is its Settlement Watch, which monitors and protests against the building of settlements, along with studying settler attitudes regarding possible evacuation and compensation. Shortly after the beginning of the second Intifada, the movement was instrumental in the creation of the Israeli Peace Coalition, which evolved into the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Coalition, composed of political and public figures as well as grassroots activists from both the Israeli and Palestinian mainstream. (See Peace Now website: http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/homepage.asp).

[218] See Ben-Eliezer, U. (2005). op. cit.

time, Israeli settlers continued to expand their settlements in the occupied territories and new radical right-wing groups emerged on the scene, such as Women in Green and This Is Our Land (Zo Artzenu).[219] After Rabin's assassination and following the victory of Netanyahu's Likud Party at the 1996 elections, civil society right-wing activism however considerably decreased.[220] During those years, CSOs on the Zionist as well as anti-Zionist left - often defined as peace camp or peace movement - were characterized by a variety of tactics, ranging from humanitarian missions and human rights campaigns to more political activities, but their common objective was the promotion of a win-win solution for the parties involved in the conflict. They recognized the Palestinian right of self-determination and the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. However, joint activities particularly between Zionist peace groups and Israeli Arab CSOs have always been hampered by the fact that the former openly identified with the Zionist ideology and never embraced pacifist antimilitaristic positions.[221] Even if the principles and efforts of the peace movement significantly contributed to the Oslo process, Israeli decision-makers refused to give it any credit and relegated it to the margins of negotiations. This contributed to the gradual slowdown of the movement between the early 1990s and the collapse of the Oslo Accords in the summer of 2000. The decline in the movement's activity was accompanied by other trends: a progressive institutionalization of the movement, supported by external donors such as the EU and international foundations; the emergence of new groups that were by no means grassroots oriented, such as The Jerusalem Link and the Peres Center for Peace,[222] and

[219] Women for Israel's Tomorrow (Women is Green) has been active since late 1993 as a registered non-profit organization. Its activities include weekly street theatre and public demonstrations, articles, posters, advertisements in newspapers and lectures. It is opposed to a two-state solution and the return of land occupied during the Six Day War of 1967, and aggressively supports Israeli settlement of those territories, which it proposes should be annexed. (See Women in Green website: http://www.womeningreen.org/). The Zo Artzenu movement was established with the aim of opposing the Oslo process and mainly operates through aggressive protest activities, including halting traffic throughout the entire country. The movement refers to non-violent civil disobedience against any attempt to uproot settlements or hand over parts of Greater Israel to the Palestinians.

[220] See Hermann, T. (2006), op. cit., pp. 45-47.

[221] Ivi, (2006), p. 48. An example of recent activities promoted by Palestinian Arabs in Israel, see The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,* 2006, available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/future-vision-english.pdf.

[222] The Jerusalem Link is the coordinating body of two independent women centers: Bat Shalom - The Jerusalem Women's Action Center, located in West Jerusalem, and Merkez al-Quds lal-Nissah - The Jerusalem Center for Women, located in East Jerusalem. It campaigns for a viable solution of the conflict based on the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, an independent state alongside the state of Israel, Jerusalem as the capital of both states, and a final settlement of all relevant issues based on international law. (See The Jerusalem Link website:

the creation of ad hoc coalitions of peace and human rights groups, such as the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions and the Coalition of Women for Peace.[223]

The events at the beginning of the 21st century - especially the failure of the Camp David II Summit and the second Intifada, together with the culturalization and securitization of relations between the West and "Islam" after 9/11 generated mixed reactions among Israeli CSOs.[224] Right-wing groups and settler activists were re-empowered and reacted both through civil activism and violent acts against Palestinians and their properties. In the peace camp instead, the collapse of negotiations and the upsurge of violence resulted in a considerable reduction of civil activities and external financial support. As a consequence of Palestinian suicide bombings in particular, the narrative of political dialogue advocated by the peace movement lost public resonance and legitimacy.[225] However, the launch of Prime Minister Sharon's plan of unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip provoked strong reactions by right-wing activists, who conducted a campaign to convince Likud members to vote against the plan. The much weakened as well as hardened peace movement supported Sharon's plan and staged demonstrations and initiatives to counter the activities of settlers and their supporters.[226] Israeli CSOs have always been careful not to fully associate themselves with international movements and campaigns, fearing that this would cast doubt on their patriotism and loyalty to the Israeli-Jewish collectivity.[227] Recent developments in Israeli civil society suggest a gradual disengagement of Israeli CSOs from the political sphere and the big questions of war and peace, "towards an isolated, separated, apolitical, post-material perspective", locking their activities "into narrow frameworks, communities and even

---

http://www.batshalom.org/jlink_about.php). The Peres Center for Peace is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization founded in 1996 by Shimon Peres. Its peacebuilding activities are based on five main pillars: People-to-People Dialogue and Interaction, Capacity-Building through Cooperation, Nurturing a Culture of Peace in the Region's Youth, Business and Economic Cooperation, Humanitarian Responses. (See The Peres Center for Peace website: http://www.peres-center.org/).

[223] See Hermann, T. (2006), cit., pp. 49-50. See also the Israeli Committee against House Demolition website at http://www.icahd.org/eng/ and the Coalition of Women for Peace website at http://coalitionofwomen.org/home/english.

[224] See Ram, U. (2005), Four Perspectives on Civil Society and Post-Zionism in Israel.

[225] See Hermann, T. (2006), cit., p. 52-53.

[226] Ivi, (2006), pp. 52-57.

[227] Ivi, (2006), p. 58.

sectors". This tendency could represent a chronic difficulty for Israeli civil society "to serve as a harbinger for peace".[228]

The development of Palestinian civil society has always been influenced by three crucial factors: the absence of a sovereign and democratic state in the Palestinian territories, the extremely repressive Israeli occupation and the heavy dependence of these organizations on foreign funds. All these factors have substantially hindered the growth and power of Palestinian civil society, and limited its impact on the resolution of the conflict. Nevertheless, Palestinian CSOs have always played a vital role in Palestine: they have been an integral part of the Palestinian national movement and its aspiration for a free and sovereign Palestine. Moreover, since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, they have performed an important function in providing services in the social, educational and medical fields to the Palestinian population, and in supporting the overall development process of the Palestinian territories.[229]

The Oslo agreements and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) represented a major watershed for Palestinian NGOs, forcing them to change their strategies and role in order to adapt to the new political and socio-economic context. Before the Oslo agreement, Palestinian activists focused on pursuing the common goal of ending the Israeli occupation and directed their efforts mainly against the Israeli government and army. This unity of intent, aimed more at combating the enemy was shattered by the Oslo Accords, although many organizations criticized or openly rejected the Oslo track. The advent of the PNA also eroded some of the space of civil society while opening new areas of activity. The PNA claimed to be representative of the Palestinian voice and struggle, thus competing with the civil society sector in its basic raison d'être.[230] At the same time, CSOs were confronted with new and complex challenges, such as strengthening the legal system, institution-building, internal human rights and the rule of law.[231]

[228] See Ben-Eliezer, U. (2005), cit.
[229] See Jarrar, A. (2005), The Palestinian NGO Sector: Development Perspectives.
[230] See Hassassian, M. (2006), Civil Society and NGOs Building Peace in Palestine.
[231] See Jarrar, A. (2005), cit.

During the second Intifada, CSOs have continued to function, but focusing increasingly on emergency and relief services. Conflict resolution initiatives, by contrast, faced a series of new obstacles: some Palestinian CSOs stopped their advocacy activities and joint ventures with their Israeli counterparts, others refused USAID funding because of the latter's conditions concerning the support to terrorism, while others still opposed tripartite civil society relations (European/Palestinian/Israeli) encouraged by the European Commission.[232] At present, there are only few conflict resolution organisations that carry out peacebuilding activities in Palestine. Among them, we find the Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue, The Palestinian Center of Alternative Solutions, the People's Campaign for Peace and Democracy and the Children of Abraham. These organizations are characterized by a significant divergence of opinions, activities, internal structures and financial resources. However, they all share a particular interest in human rights, awareness-raising at home and abroad.[233] Civic institutions and organizations established and supported by Islamist movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad also deserve mention. These organizations are opposed to dialogue and conflict resolution along the lines of the Oslo framework and have tended to focus on the socioeconomic and political needs of the Palestinians.[234] Part of the electoral success of Hamas in the 2005 municipal elections and the 2006 parliamentary elections can be attributed by the effectiveness of these organizations in providing services and spreading their political messages.[235]

As far as the international community support for Palestinian civil society is concerned, foreign aid has been an essential element for the continuation of the peace process over the last two decades. However, the plethora of foreign funded civil society projects after the Oslo agreement seems to have contributed to the detachment of Palestinian CSOs from the situation on the ground and from the needs of the Palestinian population, as these organizations have responded more to the desiderata of external donors in terms of both content and management than to needs and interests on the ground.[236] Moreover, Palestinian NGOs have also been penalized by

[232] See Hassassian, M. (2006), cit., p. 81.
[233] Ivi, (2006), p. 73.
[234] Ivi, (2006), p. 82.
[235] See Challand, B. (2005), Looking Beyond the Pale: International Donors and Civil Society Promotion in Palestine.
[236] Ibidem. (2005).

the interruptions in external funds during the various phases of the conflict: after the substantial boost received from international funds in the run-up to the Oslo process, external funds were redirected towards the PNA after its establishment in 1994. More recently, following the electoral victory of Hamas in 2006, the Israeli withholding of Palestinian tax revenues and international sanctions have limited further funds available to Palestinian CSOs. Since the 2007 political split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, international aid has poured back into the West Bank while the external siege on the Gaza Strip has deepened.[237]

Joint activities between mainstream Palestinian and Israeli CSOs started during the first Intifada in 1987: the aim of these initiatives was to establish dialogue and contribute to Track II diplomacy. Following the signing of the Oslo agreement, international attention towards these joint activities considerably increased and hundreds of new initiatives were financed by external donors, with the EU taking the lead.[238] These people-to-people (P2P) initiatives were aimed at promoting peace, goodwill and understanding between the sides, thus creating the relational infrastructure necessary to advance and increase support for the peace process negotiated at the political level.[239] These initiatives usually applied the following scheme: Israelis, Palestinians and internationals meeting for a limited period of time and often in a neutral territory for seminars, discussions, youth camps, workshops, training courses etc. with a limited follow-up.[240] However, in the Israeli-Palestinian case these initiatives have failed to deliver tangible long-term results due to limited funding (approximately USD 26 million between 1993 and 2000), disparities in power and resources between Israeli and Palestinian representatives, a lack of political and financial support by officials on both sides, scarce involvement of the grassroots, language limitations (i.e., activities being restricted to English-speakers), and a lack of media attention and public exposure.[241] The eruption of the second Intifada harmed significantly the extensive web of joint activities created between 1993 and 2000. Some joint Israeli-Palestinian NGOs have endured however, although their impact has

[237] See Simoni, M. (2006), op. cit.
[238] See Dajani M., Baskin, G. (2006), Israeli-Palestinian Joint Activities: Problematic Endeavor, but Necessary Challenge, p. 87. In 1998 the EU formalised a budget line for the P2P as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, while in 2000 the US Department of State established the 'Wye River People-to-People Exchange Program'.
[239] Ivi, (2006), p. 88.
[240] See Simoni, M. (2008), cit.
[241] See Dajani M., Baskin, G. (2006), cit., pp. 95-100.

been negligible due to their limited size and budget, their operational difficulties and their location outside the mainstreams.[242]

At present, there are fourteen joint NGOs operating through research, education, advocacy and action in the fields of public policy, economics, social justice, environment, human rights, culture, women rights and youth.[243] Two joint initiatives have been recently launched as the result of unofficial, joint Israeli-Palestinian efforts: the People's Voice Project of Ami Ayalon and Sari Nusseibeh, and the Geneva Initiative. The People's Voice Project aims at collecting hundreds of thousands of Israeli and Palestinian signatories for a statement of principles outlining a two-state solution.[244] The final objective is to mobilize public support to create both the legitimacy and the pressure on policy-makers to negotiate such an agreement. However, the initiative has gained little media attention and the collection of signatories has progressively slowed down, thus failing to achieve a discernible impact on the political establishments.[245] The Geneva Initiative takes the form of a draft of a permanent status agreement, which spells out in great detail the terms of key issues such as borders, Jerusalem, refugees, security and monitoring arrangements.[246] The text was negotiated over a period of nearly three years by a diverse group of Israelis and Palestinians, including Israeli military, political, academic and literary figures and Palestinian political figures, community activists and civil society leaders, with facilitation by Swiss governmental and non-governmental agencies.[247] Even if the initiative has received wide attention in the Middle East and beyond, the reaction of the media and politicians in the region has been mixed and its effectiveness is unclear.

---

[242] See Simoni, M. (2008), cit.
[243] Joint Israeli-Palestinian NGOs include: Alternative Information Service (http://www.alternativenews.org), Coalition of Women for a Just Peace (http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org), Crossing Borders (http://crossingborders.org), The Economic Cooperation Foundation (http://ecf.org.il), The Families Forum-The Parents' Circle (http://theparentscircle.org), Friends of the Earth Middle East (http://wwwfoeme.org), The Friendship Village (http://www.friendshipvillage.org.il), Israeli/Palestinian Centre for Research and Information (http://www.ipcri.org), Israeli-Palestinian Peace Coalition, MidEast Web for Coexistence (http://www.mideastweb.org), Neve Shalom-Wahat al_Salam (http://nswas.org), One Voice (http://silentnolonger.org), Re'ut Sadaka (http://www.reutsadaka.org), Seeds of Peace Center for Coexistence (http://www.seedofpeace.org).
[244] See the Ayalon-Nusseibeh Statement of Principles (2002), available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/ayalon.html.
[245] See Kelman, H. C. (2005), Interactive Problem Solving in the Israeli/Palestinian Case, p. 20.
[246] See the Geneva Accord (2003), available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/geneva.html.
[247] See Kelman, H. C. (2005), cit., p. 21.

Turning to research, several Political Science and International Relations Departments in Israeli universities conduct research and study programmes on peace and conflict resolution, with a particular focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, within these departments several research institutes and think tanks have been established, offering research, publications, training courses, seminars and workshops on the same topics. On the right-end of the spectrum we find the Programme on Conflict Resolution at the Bar-Ilan University Department of Political Studies, established in 1997 and offering an interdisciplinary programme in Conflict Management and Negotiation to a community of scholars that work together to develop and expand the role of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution), mediation, and conflict management.[248] Affiliated to this Department at Bar-Ilan University, the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), established in 1993, works on security and conflict management in the Middle East by conducting policy-relevant research on "strategic" subjects, particularly as they relate to Israel's national security and foreign policy.[249] Moving to the centre and centre-left, the Hebrew University Department of International Relations of the Hebrew University also conducts research and teaching activities dealing with issues of war, peace, and strategy, and in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, research related to Israel, the Jewish people, and the region.[250] Within the Hebrew University, the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace was founded in 1965 with the support of former US President Harry S. Truman. Its activities include studies on Middle East issues, with an emphasis on Israeli-Palestinian relations, promoting and enhancing peace, cooperation and welfare in the region. Joint Arab-Jewish research projects are particularly encouraged.[251] The Tel Aviv University Department of Political Science offers a masters degree in diplomacy and security and hosts several research institutes such as The Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, The Curiel Center for International Affairs and The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research.[252] The Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at the Givat Haviva Institute, established in 1963 to bring Jews and Arabs in

[248] See Bar-Ilan University Department of Political Studies at http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/po/english.html.
[249] See Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) at http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/.
[250] See Hebrew University Department of International Relations at http://ir.huji.ac.il/Scientific%20Areas%20of%20Research%20and%20Teaching%20.htm.
[251] The Harry S.Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at http://truman.huji.ac.il/about.asp.
[252] See Tel Aviv University Department of Political Science http://spirit.tau.ac.il/poli/.

Israel closer and to educate them into mutual understanding and partnership, is also particularly active. The Center develops formal and informal programmes to bridge the gaps in the fields of Jewish-Arab relations and promote greater understanding between different groups in Israeli society.[253]

Palestinian university programmes and departments dedicated to peace and war studies are more limited. There are, however, different policy-oriented research institutions involved in these fields. The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research is an independent, non-profit research institute and think tank for policy analysis, opinion polling and academic research established in 2000. Its Strategic Analysis Unit analyses Palestinian-Israeli relations, including security relations, future political and economic relations, psychological impediments to peace, the implementation of peace agreements, and mutual challenges and problems facing the two societies. There is also a programme on Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which involves background research, policy analysis, and meetings with academics, policy-makers, experts, parliamentarians, and leaders of political factions examining final status issues.[254] The Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue was established in 2003 by a group of Palestinian academics. It promotes dialogue between cultures and religions as a way to bridge the gap between nations and create mutual acceptance between parties in conflict in the Middle East. Palestinian youngsters between 17 and 23 are educated and trained to become peaceful and democratic leaders of a future Palestinian state. It also conducts public opinion surveys, focusing mostly on the Palestinian population. The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) is an independent non-profit institution located in Jerusalem. It seeks to present the Palestinian Question in its national, Arab and international contexts through academic research, dialogue and publications. PASSIA's projects include seminars, training for Palestinian graduates in international affairs and workshops on the question of Jerusalem.[255]

Turning to the media, it is widely believed that modern wars are fought as much on TV screens and in the media as they are on the ground. This is very much the case of

[253] See Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva Institute at http://www.givathaviva.org/Page/31.
[254] See Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research at http://www.pcpsr.org/strategic/strategic.html.
[255] See PASSIA website at http://www.passia.org/..

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians complain that media coverage is biased in favour of the other side, and an impressive number of watchdog groups have been created to monitor the reporting in newspapers, TV and on the internet, both in Israel, Palestine and abroad.[256] Israel's most important newspapers are Ma'ariv, Yediot Ahronot and Ha'aretz, and its two major television stations are Channel 1 and Channel 2. As for Palestine, the three major dailies are Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam and Al Hayat Al-Jadida, while the major broadcast news media is the radio emission Voice of Palestine. Films and documentaries have also become important vehicles of the expression of different views on the conflict and have played a vital role in challenging stereotyped media images of the conflict.[257] The lack of media exposure of CSOs activities has been considered as one of the main causes of limited civil society impact. This is mainly due to the scarce interest of the media in positive news and peace news, while conflict news is privileged. However, it can be linked also to the tendency of organizers to host meetings in a media-free closed-doors environment in order to stimulate dialogue between the parties and prevent obstructionist actions against these initiatives and their promoters (such in the case of P2P activities).

Media reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is subject to severe hardships. According to Freedom House, both Israel and the PNA severely restrict press freedom and often impede journalists' ability to report safely and accurately on events in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Journalists reporting from the occupied territories are required to carry Israeli-issued press cards: for Palestinian and Arab journalists, these cards are very difficult to obtain.[258] A report by the International Press Institute covering the period from the beginning of the Al-Aqsa intifada in 2000 until 2004 denounced twelve journalist deaths, at least 478 press freedom violations carried out by Israeli authorities and another 29 violations carried out by Palestinian

[256] They include pro-Israel watchdog groups - Accuracy in the Media, BBC Watch, Beyond Images, Committee for the Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, Eye on the Post, Fraud Factor, Honest Reporting, Just Journalism, Media Watch International, NPR Bias, Promoting Responsibility in Middle East Reporting, Take a Pen – pro-Palestine watchdog groups - Arab media Watch, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, If Americans Knew, Institute for Middle East Understanding, Palestine Media Watch, Palestine National; Authority International Press Centre Media Watch, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs – and unaffiliated groups - Media Channel.
[257] See Raskin, R. (2006), Cinematic Representations of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, pp. 120-122.
[258] See Israeli-Occupied Territories and Palestinian Authority (2007), Map of Press Freedom, Freedom House.

authorities.[259] Israel's army and security services continued to commit a range of press abuses in 2005 and 2006. Journalists were subject to gunfire, physical abuse, arrest, and substantial limits on their freedom of movement. The Palestinian media has also faced pressures from the PNA: threats, arrests and abuses of journalists considered critical of the PNA, Fateh and, more recently, Hamas, have become routine.[260] In its 2007 world press freedom ranking, Reporters Without Borders ranked the internationally recognized Israel (within its pre-1967 borders) in 44th place. The PNA came 158th place out of 169 countries and territories in the world. Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories ranked 103rd.[261]

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

After the collapse of Soviet Union civil societies in the New Independent Countries had little chances to emerge. The trends in their developments are similar. Civil societies in the recognized states are more advanced than those in the de facto republics. Georgian civil society has made some progress: it is relatively independent from government and therefore can formulate its own opinion on various issues. Civil society in Abkhazia instead is less open and more dependent on officials.[262] On both sides, the level of civil society involvement in policy-making is low, and this is particularly true of organizations outside capital cities. In general Georgian and Abkhaz civil societies are not enough strong to influence how the conflict could be resolved and while assisting the peace process but are unlikely to trigger a breakthrough. There is also a lack of coordination between the Georgian and Abkhaz civil society sectors, a problem exacerbated by the asymmetries between the two sides in terms of levels of experience, availability of resources, degree of professionalism, and levels of civil society development in general. The problem of cooperation and coordination is also caused by the way in which historical memories have been reconstructed on both sides, and, less so, barriers created by language (although Russian remains the lingua franca between the two sides).[263] Georgian and Abkhaz

[259] See *ISRAEL/PALESTINE:* Press Freedom Violations in Israel and Palestine from 29 September 2000 to 28 September 2004 (Issued on September 2004).
[260] See Israeli-Occupied Territories and Palestinian Authority, (2007), cit.
[261] See World Press Freedom index 2007: http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025.
[262] See Matveeva, A. (2000), p. 2.
[263] See Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, Summary of PRIME Study of NGOs (2000/2001), p. 13.

CSOs have also failed to bridge the gap between top and grassroots level as elaborated by John Paul Laderach in so far as the grassroots have remained marginalized. In other words, conflict settlement and resolution appears to remain firmly in the hands of official actors with civil societies playing a supporting and reactive role.

More than 15 years of war talk by official structures and even mid-level actors in Azerbaijan and Armenia makes conflict settlement impossible. There are a certain societal beliefs, imaginations, and interpretations around collective memories of confronted parties that are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. It is difficult to imagine that the future of the Nagorno-Karbakh conflict will be decided in Stepanakert, as the decision-making power lies in the hands of the Azeri and Armenian authorities. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is considered "intractable". Some of the reasons for this are the lack of public diplomacy and contacts between the confronted parties, NGOs and media activists, as well as the lack of media coverage of the other side's positions and the enhancement of an enemy image through stereotyping. All this leads to a general feeling of distrust in public diplomacy, feelings of victimization and unwillingness to compromise.[264] Conflict parties have adopted a 'wait and see' approach. Within this context, civil society in Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karbakh and Armenia has practically no impact on conflict resolution. The general political context continues to be a significant barrier to a major development of the third sector in all recognized and *de facto* states, where civil society is still not an important actor in the policy-making process and in society writ large. The impact of CSOs in educating citizens and empowering them to defend their rights has been limited. Local NGOs have carried out some projects on public awareness, community development, empowerment, conflict resolution, youth work, etc, but many of these activities have not yielded substantial results. Academia has tended to prove its side's historical or territorial claims, while focusing less on policy-oriented studies, joint research-projects as well as debates and conferences on conflict resolution issues.[265] Likewise, the media in all three parties has not contributed to breaking down

[264] See Ismailzade, F. (2007), Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Time-Out until 2009.
[265] See Gahramanova, A. (2007), Peace strategies in "frozen" ethno-territorial conflicts: integrating reconciliation into conflict management: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh.

stereotypes between confronted parties. The Armenian media is still talking about "genetic incompatibility" of these peoples.[266]

The general trend of civil society development in Moldova follows a similar trajectory as in other post-Soviet countries. Civic activism and political participation is limited, even if the government now tries to involve the third sector in decision-making and their level of cooperation has increased. With the eruption of the conflict, civil society in Transnistria has had no possibility to emerge. Existing CSOs are restricted in their activities and the leadership keeps this sector under close surveillance. The actors in second-track diplomacy have been unable to resolve the Moldavan/Transnistrian conflict. The activities undertaken by local civil society organizations have been insignificant with little impact on conflict resolution. This has been due to several factors includine authoritarianism in Transnistria, limited citizen participation in the peace- and policy-making in Moldova; foreign funding to NGOs in Transnistria is prohibited, the lack of experience and professionalism of activists in peacebuilding efforts, the absence of communication and information exchange, the passivity of the media in covering CSO initiatives, and the scarcity of open discussion about the conflict.

The role of both Moroccan and Sahrawi civil societies towards the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict has been very limited. This is firstly due to the fact that negotiations have been monopolized by the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front, with Algeria acting as an observer in the process. Civil society in Morocco has often been instrumental to pursuing the government's goals on the Western Sahara, while opposition stances by Moroccan CSOs and the media have been repressed. Embryonic civil society in the occupied territories suffers from heavy restrictions imposed on the freedom of access, movement, association and expression. Nevertheless, CSOs have succeeded in mobilizing international support for the Sahrawi cause through activities and denouncements against Moroccan economic exploitation of the occupied territories and human rights abuses against the population. There have been few joint Moroccan-Sahrawi initiatives to promote mutual understanding and rapprochement promoted by human rights activists, but these have been constantly obstructed by the Moroccan government.

[266] See Baghdasarian, G. (2005), A Karabakh Armenian Perspective.

In the Middle East, Israel CSOs have not had direct influence on specific policies in peacemaking. Palestinian CSOs have proved effective in responding to people's basic needs, but have been a product of the conflict (and peace process) system, failing to transcend it.[267] CSO activities both in Israel and Palestine have been more reactive than proactive in relation to the major turning points in the conflict. However, civil society action has been quite successful in laying the groundwork for cognitive changes and introducing new options for the resolution of the conflict.[268] This is true also of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities, even if their effectiveness has been limited by the lack of financial and political support, inequality among the actors involved, and lack of media exposure. In some cases, activities carried out by conservative and radical groups in both Israel and the Palestinian territories actually contributed to the persistence or fuelling of the conflict.

Recommendations

Problems facing civil society are similar across all five cases. Preliminary recommendations for the further development of this sector could include:

- Local civil society organizations could concentrate on the involvement of wider sectors of society in social and political changes, thus actively promoting the values of democracy to be learnt and experienced on the ground.
- CSOs could strengthen their "watchdog" and evaluation functions on issues such as democratization, human rights protection, conflict resolution, corruption, and transparency. The dialogue between the government and civil society must be intensified. This goal requires an increase in the monitoring capacity and policy analysis skills.
- CSOs could work closely with official structures to improve the legislative framework that affects their activities, as well as local legislation to promote greater public participation in local decision-making.
- Dialogue between the mid-range actors should concentrate on less sensitive frameworks and not on status issues in order to foster confidence building and progress on the ground. CSOs could also promote dialogue on issues of common

[267] See Hassassian, M. (2006), Civil Society and NGOs Building Peace in Palestine, cit., p. 66.
[268] See Hermann, T. (2006), cit., p. 57.

interest, such as economic development, the environment, cultural matters. The civil societies in the non-recognizes entities would especially benefit from these initiatives in view of their state of international isolation.

- CSOs could establish local forums for dialogue and problem-solving, community meetings and develop problem-solving methods, as well as organize activities and trainings in schools to promote tolerance and cross-cultural understanding.[269] The establishment of mutual contacts between confronted societies is essential for confidence-building. This would stimulate public involvement (particularly of marginalized groups) in the peace processes.
- Education via schools, the media, and community organizations could be oriented more on reducing existing prejudices between the parties, emphasizing common characteristics. Youth in all separatist regions lacks information not only about the peace process, but also of the wider world. Therefore the creation of youth peacebuilding activities, summer schools and peace centres, and the encouragement of joint academic projects among young scholars would be desirable.
- Greater self-evaluations regarding the effectiveness of CSO contributions to public debate and conflict resolution would be desirable. They must regularly produce documents and statements about the problems they have identified and publicize and disseminate the results of their researches.
- CSOs could establish regular contacts and exchanges with grassroots groups in order to keep in touch with the needs of people and channel their requests and views to the attention of policy-makers.
- Greater ties between CSOs and the media could be cultivated. In particular, the local media, as an important part of civil society, must deal more with the development of a civic culture and overcome the negative impression that the general public has of NGOs.
- The mass media must refrain from militaristic rhetoric and minimize enemy-making rhetoric and preparing societies for compromise. By contrast it could pay more attention to positive examples of peacebuilding initiatives. Language used in the media must be conflict-sensitive.

[269] See Connie, P. (1998), p. 231.

THE LIST OF CSOs

	NGOs	Research Institutes	Media
GEORGIA/ABKHAZIA	The South Caucasus Network of NGOs of Refugees/IDPs "Ojakh" (Georgia)	Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), (Georgia)	Studio Re (Georgia)
	Human Rights in Georgia	International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), (Georgia)	Apsnypress (Abkhazia)
	Cultural and Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi" (Georgia)	Partners-Georgia, (Georgia)	Black Sea Press (Georgia)
	UMCOR Youth House in Tbilisi	Foundation for Citizens' Initiative and Future of Humankind (Abkhazia)	Abkhazia: Grajdanskaia Obshestvo (Abkhazia)
	UMCOR Youth House in Sokhumi (Abkhazia)	Center for Development of a Civil Society (Abkhazia)	Respublika Abkhazia
	Assist Yourself - Association of IDPs from Abkhazia (Georgia)	Civic Initiative Foundation (Abkhazia)	Kavkaz Press (Georgia)
	Association of Displaced Women from Abkhazia (Georgia)		Radio Soma (Abkhazia)
	Civic Initiative – Man of Future Foundation (Georgia)		Forum
	Samursakan (Abkhazia)		Chegemskaya Pravda (Abkhazia)
	Daily Human Rights Youth Club (Abkhazia)		
	Centre for Humanitarian Programmes (Abkhazia)		
AZERBAIJAN/NAGORNO-KARABAKH/ARMENIA	The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICCNL-Baku), (Azebaijan)	Resource Center of Stepanekert (Nagorno-Karabakh)	OpenArmenia
	Karabakh Liberation Organisation (KLO), (Azerbaijan)	Dialogue Center for Culture Study (Armenia)	Novan Tapan Infromation Agency (Armenia)
	Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA, Azeri branch)		Yerevan Press Club (Armenia)
	The Open Society NGO (Nagorno-Karabakh)		Bakinskiy rabochiy (Azerbaijan)
	European Integration NGO (Armenia)		Baku Press Club (Azerbaijan)
	Transcaucasus Women's Dialogue (Azerbaijan)		Zerkalo (Azerbaijan)
	Society of Azerbaijan Women for Peace and Democracy in the Caucasus (Azerbaijan)		Ganjabasar (Azerbaijan)
	"Harmony" women NGO (Azerbaijan)		Azat Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)
	Association of Lawyers of Azerbaijan		Demo (Nagorno-Karabakh)
	Azerbaijan Society for Protection of Rights of Women		Chto Delat (Nagorno-Karabakh)
	"Hayet" (Azerbaijan)		Martik (Nagorno-Karabakh)
	"Umid" (Azerbaijan)		KarabakhOpen.com (Nagorno-Karabakh)
	Association of Investigative Journalists of Armenia		
	Helsinki Initiative-92 (Nagorno-Karabakh)		
	Youth Democracy (Nagorno-Karabakh)		
	Press Council of Azerbaijan		
	Journalist Association "Eni Nasil" (Azerbaijan)		
	Union of Journalists, Democratic League of Journalist (Azerbaijan)		

MOLDOVA/ TRANSNISTRIA	Moldovan Helsinki Committee (Moldova)	Centre of Education, Information, and Social Analyses (Moldova)	Flux (Moldova)
	Resource Centre of Moldovan Non-governmental Organizations for Human Rights (Moldova)		The individual and His Rights (Transnistria)
	Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation (JCDC), (Moldova/Transnistria)		Jurnal de Chisnau (Moldova)
	Promo-Lex (Moldova)		Zierul de Garda (Moldova)
	Millennium Institute for Education and Development (Moldova)		
	Development Center for Transnistria (Promo-Lex Association)		Timpul (Moldova)
	Local Youth Councils (Transnistria)		
MAROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA	Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State (ASVDH), (Western Sahara)	Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP), (Morocco)	Sahara Press Service (Western sahara)
	Association for the Families of Saharawi Prisoners and the Disappeared (AFAPREDESA), (Western Sahara)		Maghreb Arabe Press (MAP), (Marocco)
	National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW), (Western Sahara)		Western Sahara Online (Western sahara)
	Moroccan Committee for the Regrouping of the Saharan Families (COREFASA), (Morocco)		*Le Journal* (Marocco)
	Association of the Moroccan Sahara, (Morocco)		Arabe Press (MAP), (Marocco)
	Association of the Parents of Sahrawi Victims of Repression in the Tindouf Camps (PASVERTI), (Morocco)		
	Al Massira Association for the defence of the rights of Moroccan prisoners and detained persons in the Tindouf camps (Morocco)		
	Associations Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme (AMDH), (Morocco)		
	Truth and Justice Forum (Morocco)		
	Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), (Morocco)		
	Sahrawi Journalist and Writers Union (Western Sahara)		
	Association de Soutien à un Référendum Libre et Régulier au Sahara Occidental (ARSO), (Western Sahara)		
	Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW), (Western Sahara)		
	Fish Elsewhere (Western Sahara)		
ISRAELI/P ALESTINE	Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), (Israeli)	Bar-Ilan University Department of Political Studies (Israeli)	Ma'ariv, Yediot Ahronot and Ha'aretz (Israeli)
	Peace Now (Israeli)	Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), (Israeli)	Channel 1 and Channel 2 (Israeli)
	Women in Green (Israeli)	Hebrew University Department of International Relations (Israeli)	Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam and Al Hayat Al-Jadida (Palestine)

	This Is Our Land (Zo Artzenu), (Israeli)	Harry S.Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace (Israeli)	
	The Jerusalem Link (Israeli)	Tel Aviv University Department of Political Science, (Israeli)	
	Peres Center for Peace (Israeli)	Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva Institute, (Israeli)	
	Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (Israeli)	Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (Palestine)	
	Coalition of Women for Peace (Israeli)	Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue (Palestine)	
	Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue (Palestine)	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), (Palestine)	
	The Palestinian Center of Alternative Solutions (Palestine)		
	People's Campaign for Peace and Democracy (Palestine)		
	Children of Abraham (Palestine)		
	Alternative Information Service Coalition of Women for a Just Peace (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Crossing Borders (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	The Economic Cooperation Foundation (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	The Families Forum-The Parents' Circle (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Friends of the Earth Middle East (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	The Friendship Village (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Israeli/Palestinian Centre for Research and Information (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Israeli-Palestinian Peace Coalition (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	MidEast Web for Coexistence (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Neve Shalom-Wahat al_Salam (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	One Voice (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Re'ut Sadaka (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		
	Seeds of Peace Center for Coexistence (Joint Israeli/Palestine)		

Acronyms

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFAPREDESA	Association for the Families of Saharawi Prisoners and the Disappeared
AMDH	Associations Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme
ASVDH	Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State
BESA	Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies
CIPDD	Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CONGO	Government-operated Non-governmental Organization
CORCAS	Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs
COREFASA	Moroccan Committee for the Regrouping of the Saharan Families
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
HCA	Helsinki Citizens Assembly
IA	International Alert
ICCN	International Center on Conflict and Negotiation
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IER	Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Committee
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
JCDC	Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation
KGB	*Russian abbreviation of* Committee for State Security
KLO	Karabakh Liberation Organization
MACP	Moroccan American Center for Policy
MAP	Maghreb Arabe Press
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NUSW	National Union of Sahrawi Women
OAU	Organisation of Africa Unity
P2P	People-to-people
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PASVERTI	Association of the Parents of Sahraoui Victims of Repression in the Tindouf Camps
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
U.S.	United States
UCI	University of California
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UN	United Nation
UNAG	United Nations of Georgia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
WSRW	Western Sahara Resource Watch

Bibliography

Abdullayeva, A. (2008) A strong protest for a peaceful conflict resolution in Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan), Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, 9 January, available at http://www.resistingwomen.net/spip.php?article217.

Aall, P. (2001), What do NGOs: Bring to Peacemaking?, in Ch. A Crocker (ed.), *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, United States Institute of Peace

Aall, P., (1996), Nongovernmental Organizations and Peacemaking, in Ch. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, P. Aall, *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, D. C.

Akaba, N., (2000), Grajdanskoe Obshestvo e Mirnie Iniciativi, in Aspekti Grusino-Abkhazkovo Konflikta: Materiali Gruzino-Abkhazkovo Konferencii: Grajdanskoe Obshestvo, Bejenzi, Gosudarstvennoe Ustroistva, University of California, Irvine, available at http://www.dzdz.com/peace/progs/pdfs/russian4.pdf.

Policy Forum Armenia, (2008), Armenia's 2008 Presidential Election: Select Issues and Analysis, A publication of Policy Forum Armenia, available at http://www.pf-armenia.org/fileadmin/pfa_uploads/PFA_Election_Report--FINAL.pdf.

Yerevan Press Club (2004) 'Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey: The dialogue Continues', 5-11 November, available at http://www.ypc.am/eng/index.php?go=newsletter/2004/November_eng/5_11.

Asociatia PROMO-LEX: Research on Human Rights in Transnistrian Region of Moldova (2007), Chisinau, available at http://www.promolex.ong.md/docs/reports/studiu_eng.pdf.

Association for civil society development in Azerbaijan (2008) 'Document Developed in Azerbaijan to Cease Peace Talks on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict', 8th July, available at http://avciya.az/eng/karabakh/karabakhnews/362-document-developed-in-azerbaijan-to.html.

Association for civil society development in Azerbaijan, (2008), 'Baku thinks absurd to involve Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian Community in negotiations', 13th June, available at http://avciya.az/eng/karabakh/karabakhnews/64-baku-thinks-absurd-to-involve-nagorno.html.

Ayalon-Nusseibeh Statement of Principles (2002), available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/ayalon.html.

Babbitt, E. F., (1997), Contributions of Training to International Conflict Resolution" in I. W. Zartman, J. L. Rasmussen (eds.), *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, pp. 365-387.

Baghdasarian, G. (2005), A Karabakh Armenian Perspective, Conciliation Resources, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/nagorny-karabakh/karabakh-armenian-perspective.php.

Bakker, E., (2001), Early Warning by NGOs in Conflict Areas, in B. Arts, M. Noortmann, B. Reinalda, *Non-State Actors in International Law, Politics and Governance Series*, Ashgate, Aldershot, Burlington USA, Singapore, Sydney

Barnes, C., (2005), Civil Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace, Peace-Dialogue: Cooperative Peace Project, available at http://www.peoplebuildingpeace.org/thestories/print.php?id=68&typ=refl.

Baruch Bush, R. A., Folger, J. P., (1994), The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Ben-Eliezer, U., (2005), The Civil Society and the Military Society in Israel, in Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.12 No.1, available at http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=329.

Bigdon, Ch., Korf, B., (2005), The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building, in D. Bloomfield, M. Fischer, and B. Schmelze, (eds.), *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof Centre, Berlin

Boyce, W., Koros, M., and Hodgson, J., (2002), Community Based Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Peacebuilding, Humanities Department, McMaster University, available at: http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/peace-health/cbrpb.pdf.

Bryant, Ch. GA, (1993), Social Self-Organisation, Civility and Sociology: a Comment on Kumar's Civil Society', British Journal of Sociology, volume 44, number 3, September.

Burton, J., (1990), Conflict: Resolution and Prevention, New York, St. Martin's Press.

Center for Education, Information and Social Analyses, (2006), Project "Strengthening Civil Society in Transnistrian region of Moldova", available at http://www.ong.md/index.php?mod=home&hmod=projectsbyid&id=8.

Challand, B., (2005), Looking Beyond the Pale: International Donors and Civil Society Promotion in Palestine, in Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.12 No.1, available at http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=330.

Chauffour, Cecilia, (2004), Self-censorship in order to avoid that war restarts, Caucaz Europenews, available at http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=48.

Chauffour, Cecilia, (2004), The Civil Society is getting organised. And stands out, Caucaz Europenews, available at http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=49.

Chigas, D., (2007), Capacities and Limits of NGOs as Conflict Managers, in Ch. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, and P. Aall (eds.), *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, United States Institute of Peace press, Washington, D. C.

Comelli, M., Paciello, M. C., (2007), A cost-benefit analysis of the ENP for the EU's Southern parties, Brussels, European Parliament, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=18877.

Commission of the European Communities, (2006), ENP Progress Report – Morocco, Brussels, 2006, available at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/sec06_1511-2_en.pdf.

Connie, P., (1998), Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organisations in Preventing Conflicts, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, available at http://wwics.si.edu/subsites/ccpdc/pubs/role/toc.htm.

Conciliation Resources, (2007), Breaking down barriers through film, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/caucasus/dialogue_through_film.php.

Conciliation Resources, (2008), South Caucasus Radio Diaries project, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/caucasus/radio-diaries.php.

Conciliation Resources, (2008), What we do on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/caucaus/caucasus-what-nagorny-karabakh.php.

Coppieters, B., (2006), The Question of Sovereignty in Multi-Track Diplomacy. The Case of Transnistria, Strasbourg: Venice Commission (Commission for democracy through law) of the Council of Europe, Publication CDL-JU (2006) 043, Nov 22, available at: http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL-JU(2006)043-e.asp.

CORCAS: a Culture of dialogue and consensus in Morocco, available at http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com/subject_area.php?sub_id=15.

Dajani, M., Baskin, G., (2006), Israeli-Palestinian Joint Activities: Problematic Endeavor, but Necessary Challenge, in E. Kaufman, W. Salem and J. Verhoeven (eds.), Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Lynne Rienner Publishers

Darby, J., McGinty R., (eds.), (2000), The Management of Peace Processes, Houndmills, Macmillian Press

Dbar, R., Prospects for Third Sector Development in Abkhazia, Citizen Peacebuilding Program, University of California – Irvine, available at http://www.dzdz.com/peace/progs/abkhazngo/prospects.htm.

Democratic development and Civil Society Movements in Morocco, Summary of the Study, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2005.

Deutsch, M., (1973), The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes, New Haven: Yale University Press

Diamond, L., (1994), Rethinking Civil society: Toward Democratic Consolidation, Journal of Democracy, volume 5, number 3, July

Diamond, L., (1991), The democratic Revolution: Struggles for Freedom and Pluralism in the Developing World, Freedom House, New York

Document of the World Bank, (2006), Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potentials, Limitation and critical Factors, Social Development Department, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, Report No. 36445-GLB, June 19

Document of the World Bank (2005d), Engaging Civil Society Organisations on Conflict-Affected and Fragile States: Three African Country Case Studies, Social Development Department, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development, June 28

Dudouet, V., (2008), Civil society organisations in war-to-democracy transitions: From peace-building to peace-sustaining roles, Beghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, ISA Conference San Francisco, available at http://www.berghof-center.org/uploads/download/br16e.pdf.

Erasmus, V., (2001), Relief Aid and Development Cooperation: Community Mobilization as a Tool for Peacebuilding, in L. Reychler, T. Paffenholz, (eds.), *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide,* Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Everyone's interested in the Internet - especially dictators. Introduction Internet – Annual Report 2006, Reporters without borders for press freedom, available at http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=578.

Fischer, M., (2006), Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, available at http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/fischer_cso_handbook.pdf.

Fisher, R., (1991), Negotiating Power: Getting and Using Influence, in eds. J. W. Breslin and J. Z. Rubin, Negotiation Theory and Practice, Cambridge: Program on Negotiation Books

Fisher, R., Ury W., (1983), Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements without Giving In, New York, Penguin Books

Fisher, R. J., (1972), Third Party Consultation: A Method for the Study and Resolution of Conflict, Journal of Conflict Resolution, 16

Francis, D., Ropers, N., (1999), Peace Work by Civil Actors in Post-Communist Societies, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, available at http://www.berghof-center.org/uploads/download/boc10e.pdf.

Freedom House: Nation in Transit – Moldova (2008), available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,MDA,4562d8b62,4865cf5dd,0.html.

Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Armenia 2008, available at http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2008/NT-Armenia-final.pdf.

Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Azerbaijan 2008, available at http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2008/NT-Azerbaijan-final.pdf.

Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2007), available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2007&country=7319&pf.

Freedom House: Nations in Transit 2006 – Armenia, available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/type,ANNUALREPORT,FREEHOU,ARM,473aff2fc,0.html.

Freedom House: Western Sahara – Morocco (2006), available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/WoW/2006/Morocco2006.pdf.

Freedom House: Nations in Transit – Moldova (2006), available at http://www.policy.hu/npopescu/publications/moldova2006.pdf.

Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2006), available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2006&country=7105&pf.

Freedom in the World – Transnistria [Moldova] (2005), available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2005&country=6885&pf.

Freedom House, Country Reports, Azerbaijan, 2003-2005, available at www.freedomhouse.org/research/survey2005.htm.

Freedom House: Nations in Transit 2004 – Moldova, available at http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN016583.pdf.

Gahramanova, Aytan, (2007), Peace strategies in "frozen" ethno-territorial conflicts: integrating reconciliation into conflict management: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh, Universität Mannheim: Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung, Working Paper Nr. 103, available at http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/publications/wp/wp-103.pdf.

Gandolfi, P., (2003), La société civil au Maroc: signification et issues des processus de changement sociale et politique, European University Institute, available at http://www.cespi.it/STOCCHIERO/Ascod-Marocco/societ%C3%A0%20civile_Gandolfi.pdf.

Garb, P. (ed.), (1999), The Role of Unofficial Diplomacy in a Peace Process, Abstracts of Papers presented at a Georgian-Abkhaz Conference, Sochi, Russia, UC Irvine, October, available at http://www.dzdz.com/peace/progs/pdfs/english1.htm.

Gellner, E., (1995), The Importance of Being Modular, in J. A. Hall (ed.), Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison, Polity Press.

Geneva Accord (2003), available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/geneva.html.

Grigoryan, M., Shahin, R., (2005), Between freedom and taboo media: coverage of the Karabakh conflict, in Laurence Broers (ed.), The limits of leadership: Elites and societies in the Nagorno Karabakh piece processes, Conciliation Resources, Accord 17, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/nagorny-karabakh/freedom-taboo.php.

Gurgulia, M., (2000), Grajdanskaia Obshestvo v Abkhazii: Tendencii Rasvitiia, in Aspekti Grusino-Abkhazkovo Konflikta: Materiali Gruzino-Abkhazkovo Konferencii: Grajdanskoe Obshestvo, Bejenzi, Gosudarstvennoe Ustroistva, University of California, Irvine, available at http://www.dzdz.com/peace/progs/pdfs/russian4.pdf.

Gusep, T., (2004), Civil Society: "The youth has to overcome its inertia", Caucaz Europenews, available at http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=58.

Gutmann, A., Thomson, D., (2000), The Moral Foundations of Truth Commissions, in R. I. Rotberg, D., (eds.), Thomson, Truth v. Justice: *The Morality of Thruth Commission*, Pronceton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Hall, J. A., (1995), In Search of Civil Society, in J. A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, Polity Press

Hasanov, A., Ishkanian, A., (2005), Bridging divides: civil society peacebuilding initiatives, in in Laurence Broers (ed.), The limits of leadership: Elites and societies in the Nagorno Karabakh piece processes, Conciliation Resources, Accord 17, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/nagorny-karabakh/bridging-divides.php.

Hassassian, M., (2006), Civil Society and NGOs Building Peace in Palestine, in E. Kaufman, W. Salem and J. Verhoeven (eds.), *Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Lynne Rienner Publishers

Haugerudbraaten, H., Peacebuilding: Six Dimensions and Two Concepts, Institute for Security Studies, available at: http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/7No6/Peacebuilding.html.

Havermans, J. (2002), Moldova Peace Organisations Search for Lasting Settlement, Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia, available at http://www.conflict-prevention.net/page.php?id=45&formid=72&action=show&articleid=118.

Hayner, P. B. (1994), Fifteen Truth Commissions – 1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study, Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 16, Issue 4.

Hermann, T., (2006), Civil Society and NGOs Building Peace in Israel, in E. Kaufman, W. Salem and J. Verhoeven (eds.), *Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Lynne Rienner Publishers

In Stepanakert the possibility of setting up relations with Kosovo was discussed, (2008), KarabakhOpen.Com. 12/06, available at http://www.karabakh-open.com/src/index.php?lang=en&id=9&nid=9757

Institute for Public Policy: European Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, 2007, Chisinau, available at http://www.pasos.org/www-pasosmembers-org/publications/the-european-strategy-of-the-republic-of-moldova.

International Alert in the Caucasus: Armenia/Azerbaijan: A Consortium Initiative for the Nagorny Karabakh conflict resolution process, (December 2006), available at http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/regional/caucasus_asia/caucasus_2.php.

International Center for Not-for-Profit Law: Problems of NGO Registration in Azerbaijan – a Survey Summary of Findings, available at http://www.osce.org/documents/ob/2003/08/558_en.pdf.

International Crisis Group, (2007), Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War, Europe Report № 187 – 14 November, available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/187_nagorno_karabakh___risking_war.pdf.

International Crisis Group, (2006), Abkhazia Today, Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide, Europe Report №176, 15 September, available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/176_abkhazia_today.pdf.

International Crisis Group, (2005), Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground, Europe report № 166 – 14 September, available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/166_nagorno_karabakh_viewing_the_conflict_from_the_ground.pdf.

Interview with Dr. Karen Ohanjanyan, Coordinator of the Nagorno Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92", available at http://www.ikvpaxchristi.nl/files/Documenten/Kaukasus/Interview%20met%20Karen%20Ohanjanyan.pdf.

Ismailzade, F., (2007), Ngorno-Karabakh Conflict: Time-Out until 2009, Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, 05/30, available at http://www.cacianalyst/?q=node/4622/print.

Ismailzade, F., (2006), NGOs in Azerbaijan criticized for Contacts with Karabakh, Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 15, available at http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371451.

ISRAEL/PALESTINE: Press Freedom Violations in Israel and Palestine from 29 September 2000 to 28 September 2004 (Issued on September 2004), 1 September 2004, http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/publications_detail.html?ctxid=CH0057&docid=CMS1141809995024.

Israeli-Occupied Territories and Palestinian Authority (2007), Map of Press Freedom, Freedom House, available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2007.

Jacobson, H. K., (1984), Networks of Interdependence: International Organisations and the Global Political System, Second edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Jarrar, A., (2005), The Palestinian NGO Sector: Development Perspectives, in Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.12 No.1, available at http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=324.

Karabach Conflict and Prospects of its Resolution, (2003), Focus-group discussions and mass media monitoring in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh, "Yeni nesil" ltd, Baku.

Kelman, H. C., (2005), Interactive Problem Solvine in the Israeli/Palestinian Case, in R. Fischer (ed.), *Paving the way: Contributions of interactive conflict resolution to peacemaking*, Lahnam MD: Lexington Books, available at http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/faculty/hckelman/papers/hck_InteractiveProblemSolving.pdf.

Kelman, H. C., (1990), Applying a human needs perspective to the practice of conflict resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian case, in J. Burton (ed), *Conflict: Human needs theory*, New York: St. Martin's Press

Khachatrian, H., (2007), The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Perspective of a Year-Longo Deadlock, Caucaz Europenews, available at http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=329.

Krikorian, O., (2007), Armenia: Karabakh talks' failure leads to tougher civil society stance, EurasiaNet, 09/07, available at http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/TKAI-7532UC?OpenDocument.

Kumar, K., (1993), Civil Society: an Inquire into the Usefulness of an Historical term', British Journal of Sociology, volume 44, number 3, September

Lederach, J. P., (1997), Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C.

Leenders, R., (2000), Western Sahara: Africa's last colony, Searching for Peace in Africa, available at http://www.conflict-prevention.net.

Lepsaia, A., (2000), Situacia v Abkhazii kak Model Zamknutovo Obshestva pri Nalichii bneshnevo Konflikta. Faktori, bliaiushie na Urigulirovanie, in *Aspekti Grusino-Abkhazkovo Konflikta: Materiali Gruzino-Abkhazkovo Konferencii: Grajdanskoe Obshestvo, Bejenzi, Gosudarstvennoe Ustroistva*, University of California, Irvine, available at http://www.dzdz.com/peace/progs/pdfs/russian4.pdf.

Lewicki, R. J., Saunders, D. M., and Minton, J. W., (1999), Negotiation, 3rd Edition, San Francisco: Irwin McGraw-Hill

Lynch, D., (2006), Separatist Abkhazia and the EU, Institute for Security Studies, Eurasian Issues, IESUE/COPS/INF (06)10

Maiese, M., (2003), Peacebuilding, Knowledge Base Essay, Beyond Intractability: A Free Knowledge Base on More Constructive Approaches to Destructive Conflict, available at http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/peacebuilding/.

Maouelainin, M. A., CORCAS, (2007), A vital player in the Western Sahara conflict, 7 May, available at http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.maghreb/2007-05/msg00012.html.

Matveeva, A., (2000), The conflict prevention capacities of local NGOs in the Caucasus, Royal Institute of International Affairs, January, available at http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/ACOS-64BKGY?OpenDocument&query=matveeva.

Media Diversity Institute: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Media: Discussion Point, available at http://www.media-diversity.org/articles_publications/Post-Conflict%20Reconstruction.htm.

Moynihan, J., (2008), Freedom and democracy: The only choice for Transnistria, 15 Apr., available at http://www.tiraspoltimes.com/node/1731/print.

Munson, M., Gush Emunim and the Israeli Settlers of the Occupied Territories: A Social Movement Approach, in Strategic Insights, available at http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2008/Apr/munsonApr08.asp).

Nan, S. A., (1999), Georgia-Abkhazia: Civic Initiatives, Conciliation Resources, September, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/georgia-abkhazia/civic-initiatives.php.

Neubert, D., (2004), The 'Peacemakers' Dilemma: The Role of NGOs in Process of Peace-building in Decentralised Conflicts, in M-C. Foblets and T. von Trotha (eds), *Healing the Wounds: essays on the Reconstruction of Societies after War*, Hurt Publishing

Nodia, G., (2005), Civil Society Development in Georgia: Achievements and Challenges, Policy Paper, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Citizens Advocate Program, Tbilisi, available at http://www.cipdd.org/files/7_114_458194_CivilSocietyDevelopmentinGeorgia-textEng.PDF.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), The Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti, (2004), Assessment Visit to Moldova: Observations and Recommendations, available at http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2004/12/3993_en.pdf.

Paffenholz, T., Spurk, Ch., (2006), Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding, Social Development Papers, Conflict Preventions and Reconstruction, Paper No. 36, October

Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, Summary of PRIME Study of NGOs (2000/2001), available at http://www.vispo.com/PRIME/ngostudy.htm.

Popescu, N., (2006), Democracy in Secessionism: Transnistria and Abkhazia's Domestic Policies, Central European University Center for Policy Studies, Open Society Institute, August, available at http://www.policy.hu/npopescu/publications/06.11%20IPF%20Democracy%20in%20secessionism.pdf.

Pugh, M., Post-Conflict Rehabilitation: The Humanitarian Dimension, available at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/3isf/Online_Publications/WS5/WS_5A/Pugh.htm.

Ram, U., (2005), Four Perspectives on Civil Society and Post-Zionism in Israel, in Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.12 No.1, available at http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=328.

Raskin, R., (2006), Cinematic Representations of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Nordicom Review, vol. 27 no. 1

Resource and Development Center for Transnistria, RDCT Bulletin.

Resource Center of Moldovan Non-governmental Organisations for Human Rights: Civil Society Strategy Report for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation in Moldova-Transnistria.

Rooy, A. Van, (1998), Civil Society and the Aid Industry: The Politics and Promise, The North-South Institute, Earthscan Publications Ltd, London

Ropers, N., (1997), Roles and Functions of Third Parties in the Constructive Management of Ethnopolitical Conflicts, Berghof Occasional Paper No. 14, November, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, available at http://www.berghof-center.org/uploads/download/boc14e.pdf.

Ross, M. H., (2000), Creating the conditions for peacemaking: theories of practice in ethnic conflict resolution, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Volume 23, Number 6, November, Routledge Journals, Taylor & Francis Ltd

Rupesinghe, K., Anderlini, S. N., (1998), Civil Wars, Civil Peace: An Introduction to Conflict Resolution, International Alert, London, Sterling, Virginia

San Martin, P., (2005), Nationalism, identity and citizenship in the Western Sahara, The Journal of North African Studies, Vol. 10, Nos. 3-4, September-December, available at http://www.sandblast-arts.org/web/documentation/Nationalism,IdentityandCitrizenshipinWS.pdf.

Saunders, H., (2001), Prenegotiation and Circum-negotiation: Arenas of the Multilevel Peace Process. Turbulent Peace, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace

Sattarrov, R., Faradov, T., and Mamed-zade, I., (2007), Civil Society in Azerbaijan: Challenges and Opportunities in Transition, International Center for Social Research (ICSR), CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Azerbaijan, An international action-research project coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, December, available at http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Azerbaijan_Country_report.pdf.

Schell-Faucon, S., (2001), Conflict Transformation through Educational and Youth Programmes, in Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, available at http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/schell_faucon_hb.pdf.

Shelley, T., Burden or benefit? Morocco in the Western Sahara, available at http://www.arso.org/TSh180205.htm.

Shriver, D. W., (1995), An ethic for enmies: forgiveness in politics, New York: Rowman and Littlefield

Simoni, M., (2008), "Payers" and "Players". European Institutions, National Governments and Civil Society in the Israeli-Palestinian ongoing confrontation, available at http://www.fondazionefeltrinelli.it/it/risorse_digitali/papers/war-law-and-global-order/marcella-simoni-payers-and-players-european-institutions-national-governments-and-civil-society-in-the-ongoing-israeli-palestinian-confrontation/.

Sisk, T. D., (2001), Democratization and Peacebuilding, in Ch. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, and P. Aall, (eds.), *Turbulent Peace.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace

Spangler, B., (2003), Problem-Solving Mediation. Beyond Intractability, G. Burgess and H. Burgess (eds.), Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, available at http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/problem-solving_mediation/.

Stephan, M. J., Mundy, J., (2006), A Battlefield Transformed: from Guerilla Resistance to Mass Nonviolent Struggle in the Western Sahara, Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, Spring: 1-32, available at http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/PDF/JMSS-MStephan.pdf.

Stephens, K., (1997), Building Peace in Deeply Rooted Conflicts: Exploring New Ideas to Shape the Future, INCORE.

The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, 2006, available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/future-vision-english.pdf.

Tohidi, Nayereh, (2004), Women, Civil Society, and NGOs in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan, The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Volume 7, Issue 1, November, available at http://www.icnl.org./knowledge/ijnl/vol7iss1/special_4.htm.

Tongeren, P. van., (1998), Exploring the Local Capacity for Peace – The Role of NGOs, in European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, PIOOM, and the Berghof Research Institute for Constructive Conflict Management, and Management of Violent Conflicts: An International Directory, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, Utrecht

United Nations, Charter of the United Nations: We the People of the United Nations... United for a Better World, available from http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/.

United Nations Development Programme, Civil Society Country Profile, Morocco, available at http://www.pogar.org/countries/civil.asp?cid=12.

U.S. Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights and Practices in Moldova, available at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100573.htm.

USAID: The 2004, 2005, and 2006 NGO Sustainability Index: Georgia, available at http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/index.htm

USAID: The 2005 NGO Sustainability Index: Armenia, available at http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/armenia.pdf.

USAID: The 2005 NGO Sustainability Index: Azerbaijan, available at http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2005/azerbaijan.pdf.

Willetts, P., (2002), What is a Non-Governmental Organization? Output fro the Research Project on Civil Society Networks in Global Governance, City University, London

World Press Freedom index 2007: http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025.

Zunes, S., (2007), Western Saharans Resist Moroccan Occupation, Peacework Magazine, May, available at http://www.peaceworkmagazine.org/western-saharans-resist-moroccan-occupation.

129 NGOs have been registered with the Ministry of Justice, (2007), KarabakhOpen.Com. Monday, 10/03, available at http://www.karabakh-open.com/src/index.php?lang=en&id=5&nid=2541.

Web Sites:

Alternative Information Service: http://www.alternativenews.org

Association de soutien à un référendum libre et régulier au Sahara Occidental (ARSO): http://www.arso.org.

Association for the Families of Saharawi Prisoners and the Disappeared (AFAPREDESA): http://www.afapredesa.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=6.

Association Marocain des Droits Humains: http://www.amdh.org.ma.

Bar-Ilan University Department of Political Studies: http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/po/english.html

Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA): http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/.

Blogs: http://w-sahara.blogspot.com, http://onehumportwo.blogspot.com, http://saharawiyazeina.blogspot.com/.

Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development: http://www.cipdd.org/index.php?sec_id=3&lang_id=ENG&limit=5.

Coalition of Women for a Just Peace: http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org.

Coalition of Women for Peace: http://coalitionofwomen.org/home/english

Conseil Royal Consultatif des Affaires Sahariennes (CORCAS): http://www.corcas.com/Default.aspx?alias=www.corcas.com/eng.

Crossing Borders: http://crossingborders.org.

Cultural and Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi": http://www.fundsokhumi.ge/ge/.

Fishelsewhere Campaign: http://www.fishelsewhere.org.

Friends of the Earth Middle East: http://wwwfoeme.org.

Hebrew University Department of International Relations: http://ir.huji.ac.il/Scientific%20Areas%20of%20Research%20and%20Teaching%20.htm.

Human Rights in Georgia, (2007), Campaign – "Sorry" / "Hatamzait", Web Portal on Human Rights in Georgia, 14 Mar., available at http://www.humanrights.ge/index.php?a=article&id=1546&lang=en.

IMTD, IMTD's philosophy, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, 1998, available at www.igc.apc.org/imtd/PHIL.HTML.

Israeli Committee against House Demolition: http://www.icahd.org/eng/.

Israeli/Palestinian Centre for Research and Information: http://www.ipcri.org.

Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva Institute: http://www.givathaviva.org/Page/31

London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society: http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.

Media Diversity Institute: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Media: Discussion Point, available at http://www.media-diversity.org/articles_publications/Post-Conflict%20Reconstruction.htm.

MidEast Web for Coexistence: http://www.mideastweb.org.

Moroccan American Center for Policy: http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com/about_macp.php.

National Union of Sahrawi Women: http://www.arso.org/UNFS-Homepage.htm.

"Negotiation", International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict, Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, available at: http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/negotn.htm.

Neve Shalom-Wahat al_Salam: http://nswas.org.

"Ojakh" home page: http://ojakh.caucasus.net/english/home.htm.

One Voice: http://silentnolonger.org.

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: http://www.pcpsr.org/strategic/strategic.html.

"Partners-Georgia": http://www.partners.ge/eng/projects.php.

PASSIA: http://www.passia.org/.

Peace Now: http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/homepage.asp.

Re'ut Sadaka: http://www.reutsadaka.org.

Sahara Press Service: http://www.spsrasd.info/fr/main3.php.

Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State: http://asvdh.net/english/?page_id=438.

Seeds of Peace Center for Coexistence: http://www.seedofpeace.org.

"Studio Re" Home page: http://www.itic.org.ge/studiore/abouten.HTML.

Tbilisi Youth House Foundation: http://tyhfoundation.gol.ge/.

Tel Aviv University Department of Political Science: http://spirit.tau.ac.il/poli/

The Economic Cooperation Foundation: http://ecf.org.il.

The Families Forum-The Parents' Circle: http://theparentscircle.org.

The Friendship Village: http://www.friendshipvillage.org.il.

The Harry S.Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace: http://truman.huji.ac.il/about.asp.

The Jerusalem Link: http://www.batshalom.org/jlink_about.php.

The Peres Center for Peace: http://www.peres-center.org/.

Western Sahara.net: http://www.wsahara.net.

Western Sahara Resource Watch: http://www.wsrw.org/.

Women in Green: http://www.womeningreen.org.